This month's full ballet guide

Dance and Dancers

JULY 1956

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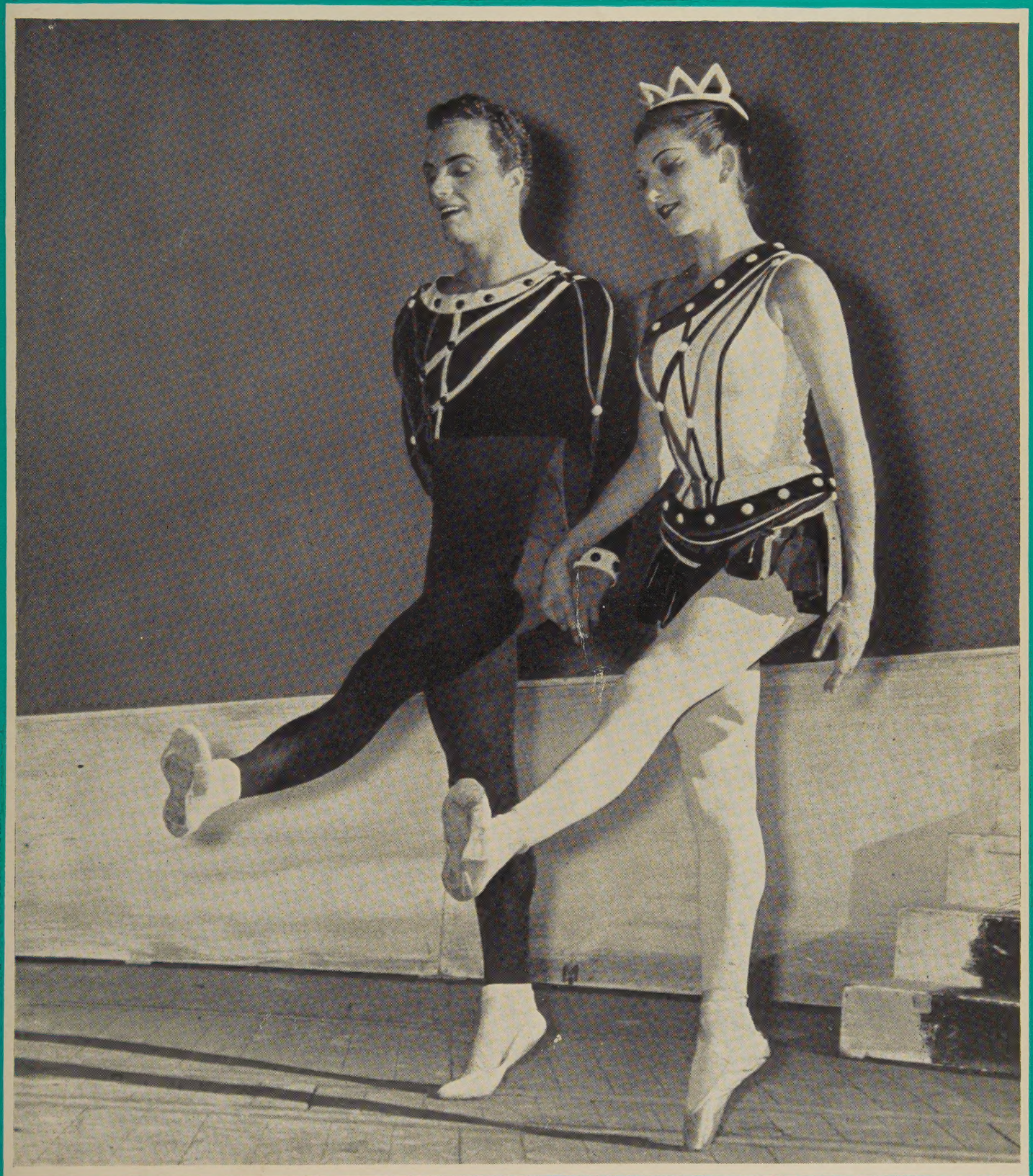

JOHN GILPIN and MARILYN BURR

of London's Festival Ballet, in Michael Charnley's *Homage to a Princess*

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Personality of the month

Photo: Jean Straker

Julian Braunsweg

MORE than anyone else connected with ballet an impresario is merely a name on a programme. He stands to lose a fortune, sometimes even his own, while his chances of acquiring anything more substantial than blood pressure and satisfaction are thin.

Julian Braunsweg has been connected with ballet for over 25 years, and has in the past been associated with Max Rheinhardt, Anna Pavlova, Nijinska's Polish company, and Léon Woizikowsky. In 1946 he brought Lifar's Nouveau Ballet de Monte Carlo to the Cambridge Theatre, and the following year was partly responsible for the presentation of De Basil's Original Ballet Russe at Covent Garden. But it is with London's Festival Ballet, of which he has been Director General from the outset, that his name is particularly connected.

The company was formed by Braunsweg from the small *corps de ballet* that supported Markova and Dolin during a provincial tour in 1949. At first it provided merely a background to its two stars, later it took on a personality of its own, and eventually it graduated to the status of Europe's most important touring, as opposed to State-supported, ballet company.

The company has been an admittedly commercial venture (inasmuch as it has had to pay its own way) from the beginning. It has made many mistakes but the need to keep the box-office turnstiles clicking has made its standards high, if popular. Its relationship with the Sadler's Wells Ballet might in some ways be compared with that between BBC Television and the Independent Television Authority.

Throughout the company's career Julian Braunsweg, in collaboration with the Artistic Director, Anton Dolin, has governed its fortunes. There have been good times and bad times, but Festival Ballet has so far weathered the storms and continued to develop. As the company, following a virtually triumphant season at Monte Carlo, embarks on its fourth annual season at the Royal Festival Hall, Dr. Braunsweg has every reason to feel very satisfied with its record and hopeful for its future.

In the same way that we do not enquire into the mechanics of a conjurer's tricks, we do not delve into the mechanics of the art of being an impresario, but an art it certainly is. Perhaps the secret is that an impresario must believe in whatever he is presenting. That Julian Braunsweg believes in and loves his company above any personal gain is no doubt the secret of its success.

July 1956 Vol. 7 No. 7

Dance and Dancers

Editor: PETER WILLIAMS
Assistant Editor: CLIVE A. BARNES
WORLD'S LARGEST NET SALE IN THE FIELD

Is it worth the money?

IT must have come as a shock to many people to learn from the statement of Lord Waverly, Chairman of the Covent Garden directors, that Covent Garden last year incurred a deficit of £98,000 and that this is bound to be exceeded this year. What is more, unless the Government does not increase the existing subsidy of £350,000 by another £100,000, then the Opera House may have to close down.

These are grave words, and coming as they do from a former Chancellor of the Exchequer they were obviously gravely considered. There are no doubt a number of taxpayers who think cultural matters a great waste of money, but then they possibly do not know that Covent Garden gets far less than almost any similar institution in other countries. Nevertheless, many will question whether Covent Garden is worth all this to ballet.

Just as every nation needs a symbolic head, whether it be a monarch, a president, or a dictator, so in its way has Covent Garden in the form of the Sadler's Wells Ballet, come to represent the symbolic apex of ballet in England.

Although the actual organisation may lose money, Sadler's Wells Ballet has brought far more than any grant into the national coffers, in indirect ways. Thousands of people travel from all parts of England, from all parts of the world, to see this company in its own setting. It is as important to the cultural life of the country as a national museum or art gallery. But the financial aspect is not all; the prestige the company brings to Britain is immense. Travelling about the world, as I have in the past year, this fact has been brought soundly home to me. Our prestige in other respects may not be so high, but as far as ballet is concerned we are the tops.

On account of the name of Sadler's Wells, other British companies enjoy great success in foreign lands, and particularly Ballet Rambert and Festival Ballet. Our choreographers, also, are eagerly sought by foreign companies, and Peggy Van Praagh is, at the moment, reproducing Sadler's Wells ballets in various parts of the globe. In addition, teachers who were originally associated with the company are doing splendid work in foreign lands. The proposed exchange between the Bolshoi Ballet and Sadler's Wells, which may have beneficial repercussions far beyond the realms of ballet, would never have been possible were it not for the opera house in Bow Street.

However, should the Government not see fit to increase the subsidy and the Royal Opera House has to close its doors, then we know that the Sadler's Wells Ballet will find a welcoming home in America, where it always enjoys its greatest success.

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The Aroma of Paris

Roland Petit, with his Ballets de Paris, returned to London for the month of May. Giving the same programme of four ballets each night, he again brought to Britain a stage spectacle that could come from no other city than Paris.

by Peter Williams

Specially photographed by Roy Round

ROLAND PETIT breaks all the generally accepted rules of ballet presentation—thank goodness!

Every single criticism levelled against him on this score is more often than not completely justified. That is if you believe in rules, though who makes them and why has never been made clear—at least so far as I am concerned.

Most of us agree that it is boring to see a lot of ballets by the same choreographer in one programme, yet all the works given by Ballets de Paris at the Palace Theatre were by Petit. We often mutter that certain incidents are "not very nice in ballet" yet practically all Petit's characters are unashamedly licentious and, more often than not, die violently. We frequently revile against extraneous noises in ballet —all emotion should be conveyed through movement we say—yet in most of Petit's works the dancers pant, grunt, scream and sing.

Again if we are out to find production faults, then these can be found in plenty, Petit's choreography is often quite untidy and the members of his *corps de ballet* hang around looking uncertain as to their function. A great deal of his work looks as though it has been improvised on the spur of the moment, and the odd thing about this is that, years later, the same things still look improvised.

The music for these works, always by distinguished composers, is often vilely played by scratch theatre orchestras. The stage management is invariably haphazard—curtains do not descend at the right moments and lights come on haphazardly or fail to show up at all.

If all this happened with any other company, I very much doubt whether we would accept it for an instant. The pundits will continue to drone to their hearts' content that "it's just not ballet"; and maybe they are right. Nevertheless it *is* splendid theatre and the crowds who flock to see these performances obviously think so too.

It would, of course, be more enjoyable if some of the above-mentioned faults were not present, but even though they are we must be grateful for what Petit gives us—a real garlic aroma of Paris.

Every art needs its rule-breakers to keep it from getting bogged down in academic grooves. The danger is that such creators are often copied unscrupulously by those who are too untalented or too lazy to think up any real ideas for themselves. In their stupidity they mistake the germ of an idea or stunt for an accomplished fact. Anybody who ever attempts to copy Petit is heading for trouble.

If Picasso paints on the shell of a blown egg we treasure it for its decorative beauty; the fact that it is no longer an egg is of little importance. That, more or less, is the way to look at Petit's wonderfully decorative ballets, which really use ballet only as a foundation.

The four Petit works given nightly at the Palace Theatre during the recent four-week season of the Ballets de Paris made an exhausting evening on both sides of the footlights—exhausting but exhilarating. Two works—*Le Loup* and *Carmen*—were well known to the London public; *La Chambre* and *Les Belles Damnées* were new.

I do not think that since Petit created *Les Demoiselles de la Nuit*, with all its feline movement, for Margot Fonteyn that he has done a better work than *Le Loup*. Both are about animals, both are concerned more with the deeper nature of the beast than with external pawings and scufflings, both are written by Jean Anouilh.

ENDEARING DEVIL: Buzz Miller, whose dancing was one of the most interesting of the new features of Ballets de Paris, as a devil in Petit's Les Belles Damnées.

POSTER designed by Tom Keogh. London hoardings were brightened by this charming poster with its two figures in pink and orange on a white ground.

Ballets old and and new

In *Le Loup*, as in most Petit works, everything hinges on the performance of the two principal roles—the girl bride and the wolf she is tricked into marrying. Success is assured when Violette Verdy and Petit himself take these parts. Verdy is a most satisfying dancer with a lovely body, prodigious technique and a wonderful quality of innocence. The role was created for her and she, in her turn, has embellished, polished and developed it. She has made it as personal to herself as Jeanmaire has the role of Carmen. When Verdy had to retire owing to an injured foot, her role was taken by Veronika Mlakar who, in spite of being a good dancer, made a far too knowing bride who would never have been deceived for an instant; the ballet therefore lost its point

To the title role of the Wolf, Petit brings nobility and a wonderful stage presence. He was dancing better during the past season than I have seen him for years. Babilée, when he took over the part two years ago, made it completely and unforgettably animal. A newcomer from the Paris Opéra—Robert Pomié—appeared on many occasions as the Wolf during this recent season. He has very good technique and was at his best in a rather acrobatic death. It takes some time, however, to assimilate the complexities of such a part, and in the early performances I saw he came somewhere halfway between Petit and Babilée, being more noble than the latter and more animal than the former without creating the impact of either.

The part of the Animal Trainer was given with compelling personality by José Ferran, but the original qualities of the gypsy dancer and the young bridegroom had vanished in the hands of Monique Vence and Vicente Nebreda.

In spite of rather noisy playing, Dutilleux's score remains haunting ballet music, particularly in the waltz for the gypsy and the bridegroom. Carzou's forest decor remains a masterpiece of arboreal stage designing.

It is so easy to draw comparisons between *Le Jeune Homme et la Mort* and *La Chambre*, the second ballet on the programme, that I will refrain from doing so. Each is concerned with young men and death in the form of strange

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LADY IN HELL: Corinna Reichel (who took over the role when Verdy hurt her foot) with Buzz Miller in Les Belles Damnées.

women, but each reflects the idiom of their respective authors—Jean Cocteau and Georges Simenon. Where the genius of Petit comes out is that he has managed to re-create the style of both writers in his choreography, in spite of similarity of theme.

A man dies, a detective in solving the crime finds an enigmatically beautiful girl and also dies like the first victim. That is the surface theme, the underlying depths are in the minds of Simenon and the more perceptive spectator.

The work was mainly built around the Modern Dancer—Buzz Miller as the detective. Miller, trained by Jack Cole, is an extremely virile and strong dancer with an engaging personality. He slides, leaps, falls and twists about on tables, chairs and the floor. He is a new type of dancer for Petit to work with, and the ballet was interesting in that it showed Petit's understanding of the Modern Dance idiom. Mlakar was most effective as the death-woman in the window across the street.

The main fault of *La Chambre* lay in the opening five minutes, when it seemed that the ballet could not make up its mind whether it was grim drama or high comedy. The shriek of the landlady who discovers the crimes at the beginning and end of the ballet therefore loses some of its theatrical effect. Bernard Buffet, whose first designing for the theatre this was, achieved a stark and atmospheric room; Georges Auric's score heightened the emotions like film background music, which was no doubt what he intended.

I never know why anything so light-hearted and frothy as *Les Ballet Damnées* should be considered unsuitable in an evening of ballet. It was completely unimportant, but great fun, and was obviously designed for no other purpose than to amuse—and very necessary, too, with three grim tragedies in the same programme.

It was a burlesque of those ladies-in-hell scenas so beloved of the French revue. Hell was like one of those sideshows at a fun-fair which are entered through the mouth of the devil with a wind machine blowing up the ladies' skirts. The male dancers, as diabolic bell-hops, were enchanting. Led by Buzz Miller, most ably assisted by José Ferran, they stood on their heads and skipped about with devilish glee. A number of rather pregnant looking girls were soon shoved into the fire to emerge as she-devils engaged in an eternal conga chain. Miller showed another side of his talent with a very real sense of broad comedy. Violette Verdy, making a staircase entrance like Gaby Delyse, was adorable throughout the ballet. Petit was clever to show both these artists in two such contrasting roles.

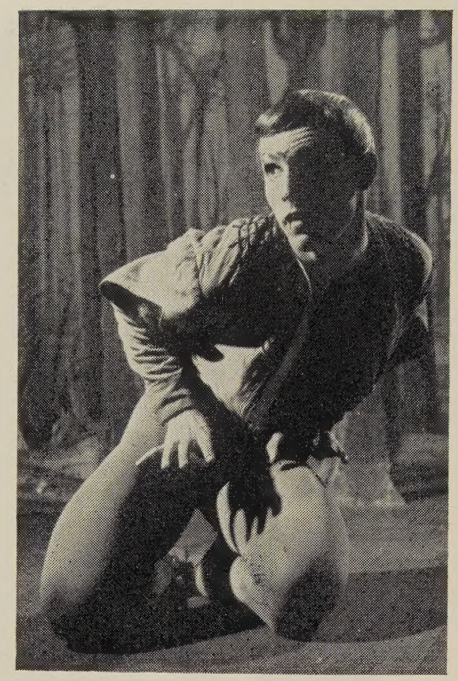
Tom Keogh had designed an all-over red setting, which I liked, and some witty she-devil costumes which were in unattractive colours. Michel Legrand's score on themes by Jean-Michel Damase would have enlivened any musical.

Apart from the performances of Verdy and Miller, which I shall always remember with pleasure, the rest could be forgotten by the end of the interval; but it had served its purpose.

Original Carmen returns

London will always have a special regard for Petit's ballet version of Bizet's *Carmen*; it was created and first acclaimed here. How would it seem with Jeanmaire returning after seven years?

One thing that cannot change is the magnificent front-cloth by Clavé (never used during the season at Princes Theatre); light mauve with occasional splashes of exciting colour, with its horses and bullfighters it creates a torpid atmosphere immediately. It rises on the sleezy cigarette girls and their bandit lovers and the



NEW WOLF: Robert Pomié, recently of the Paris Opéra, in the title role of Le Loup *in which he alternated with Petit.*

music works up to Carmen's entrance. Gone seemed to be the days when Jeanmaire would fight, struggle and spit her way on, This first scene has become tame. However when she again encountered Don Jose in the Lillas Pastia brothel, some of her old bewitching sluttishness returned and by the time they got to the bedroom everything was much as it used to be, though perhaps some of the animal ferocity has gone from their love-making.

In the roadside scene when Don Jose kills for money, Jeanmaire no longer watches with greedy eyes. In fact this scene has lost much of its dramatic impact. This failing is made up for by a thrilling death fight between the two of them in the final scene.

With subsequent performances, more savagery returned to Jeanmaire's performance of Carmen and her technique regained much of its former brilliance. Her husband, Roland Petit, seemed to have improved his performance of Don Jose and he never fails to dominate the scene. He is an artist who gives the public full value for their money, both as a performer and as a choreographer-producer. He is a man of the theatre who has done much to buck up ballet on both sides of the Channel, and we will always have every reason to be grateful for his periodic appearances in our midst.

Hardly a performance takes place in the European theatre, and I do not mean only ballet performances, which does not owe something to Petit's influence. The two major companies with which he has been connected —Les Ballets des Champs-Elysées and Ballets de Paris—have brought us new ideas, designers, writers, composers and personalities of the dance. These have invariably been used by others since and, although they have seldom been used as well as by Petit, they have given our old dried-up sources of creative ideas an extra fillip. It is possibly a good thing that Petit's companies have only a spasmodic life, as continual repetition, demanded by the ever-greedy public, would take much of the bloom and freshness from these rather ephemeral works.

In England, we have every reason to be grateful to Peter Daubeny who, at great personal risk, has had the imagination to inveigle these foreign companies to appear before us.

NEW CARMEN: A study of Violette Verdy who has been dancing this role, though she gave it only once in London—at a moment's notice.

SOLVING A CRIME: Buzz Miller, as the detective in La Chambre, *finds an energetic way of discovering how a man was killed.*

FRENZIED PARTY: Nora Kaye, as the Hostess, held aloft by guests at her party in a scene from Agnes de Mille's most recent ballet—The Rib of Eve. *The walls and ceiling of Oliver Smith's striking setting were raised and lowered during the progress of the ballet. Photo: Radford Bascome.*

The Rib of Eve

First given by Ballet Theatre at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, on April 25, 1956. Choreography by Agnes de Mille. Music by Morton Gould. Scenery by Oliver Smith. Costumes by Irene Sharaff.

Cast

The Hostess .. .. NORA KAYE
Her Husband .. .. JAMES MITCHELL
Her Best Friend .. .. BARBARA LLOYD
Her Guests and Observers .. Darrell Notara and Susan Boree, Elizabeth Carroll, Joan Eaman, Sharon Enoch, Leslie Franzos, Helen Gorst, Sally Gura, Catherine Horn, Nana Prudente, Ray Barra, Leon de Pian, Leo Duggan, Leo Guerard, Vernon Uusby, Enrique Martinez, Felix Smith, George Tomal, Vernon Wendorf.

PROGRAMMED as "a morality play, consisting of a series of parties and their aftermaths," this new ballet by Agnes de Mille was the second world premiere to be offered during Ballet Theatre's three-week season at the Metropolitan Opera House. Conceived in sardonic vein, this ballet for three principals and a *corps* deals with an egocentric hostess (Nora Kaye), her husband (James Mitchell) and her best friend (Barbara Lloyd). Composed in a fragmentary manner, this over-long work starts with the hostess preparing for the party and then goes into a series of meetings and partings with her husband that are interrupted by a series of frenzied cocktail party scenes. These latter, incidentally, were strongly reminiscent of a like party scene that de Mille staged for the stage musical *Allegro* some years ago.

It would be indeed pleasant to report that this ballet was a success, but such is not the case. In the first place, the inner motivations of the characters are not always clear and after a while one loses interest in all of them as well as in the milling, whirling *corps*. However, as in all Agnes de Mille's works, there is an extended *pas de deux*, for Nora Kaye and James Mitchell, that is most inventively conceived and superbly danced by this duo.

The setting, by Oliver Smith, consisting of a series of side and rear walls and ceilings that raise and lower during the progress of the work, is stunning, quite Oriental in feeling, and has an atmosphere all its own. The specially composed score by Morton Gould is frenetic and jerky and does not seem suited for use with a visual, plastic medium. Nor do Irene Sharaff's over-bowed tights for the girls and costumes for the men, resembling work-uniforms, help the over-all picture very much. This is definitely not one of de Mille's superior works and it certainly does little to set off Nora Kaye's considerable talents, though she dances it for all she is worth.

Arthur Todd

COVER STORIES

THIS month's cover, by Serge Lido, is of John Gilpin and Marilyn Burr in Festival Ballet's most recent creation, *Homage to a Princess*, which will have its first performance in London on July 11.

GILPIN was first taught by Tina Pearce of Southsea. In 1939 he went to the Cone-Ripman School, afterwards appearing in plays and films. In 1945 he joined Ballet Rambert, with which company he danced many principal roles and created parts in ballets by Howard and Gore. After dancing with Ballets de Paris and the Marquis de Cuevas Company, he joined Festival Ballet at its outset in 1950 and has since remained with that company.

BURR was first taught by Leon Kellaway in her native Australia. She joined the National Ballet of Australia in 1949. Coming to England in 1952, she made her debut in the New Ballet Company. Joining Festival Ballet in 1953, she rapidly achieved the status of a principal dancer.

TUDOR TO OFFENBACH: Nora Kaye (left on stool) as an operetta star watches the Can-Can girls in Tudor's ballet to Offenbach music. Photo: Radford Bascome. Below: Ruth Ann Koesun as a Debutante, John Kriza as His Imperial Excellency and Nora Kaye as the Operetta Star. Photo: Maurice Seymour

Offenbach in the Underworld

First given by Ballet Theatre at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, on April 18, 1956. Choreography by Antony Tudor. Music by Offenbach selected by Antony Tudor and arranged by David Simon. Scenery and costumes by René Bouché.

Cast

Madame la Patronne	NANSI CLEMENT
Her Little Daughter	MARLENE RIZZO
A Painter	HUGH LAING
A Debutante	RUTH ANN KOESUN
His Imperial Excellency	JOHN KRIZA
The Operetta Star	NORA KAYE
The Young Officer	SCOTT DOUGLAS
Queen of the Carriage Trade	LUPE SERRANO

Waiters, Local Ladies, Young Men and the Debutante's Friends

THE action of the ballet takes place in a fashionable café in the eighteen-seventies, where many people come to relax and enjoy themselves at the hour when most people go to sleep. As it has an international reputation, visiting celebrities come to see, to be seen, and to be amused. Among these are a famous operetta star and one of her admirers, a grand-duke. A debutante of good family, accompanied by three of her friends, arrives veiled in order not to be recognised in a place which for families is "out of bounds." There is a painter who, like all young painters, is penniless and tries to earn a meagre living by drawing sketches of the café's patrons. There is no story to the ballet, for the flirtations that take place at such a place at such a time, are most often half-forgotten by the next morning. There is neither a sad ending nor a happy ending, but only a closing time.

THOUGH offered by Ballet Theatre as a New York premiere, this work was seen by many earlier this season and last when the Canadian National Ballet visited Brooklyn. Now, set to another, less familiar score by Offenbach, and with superb period decor and luscious costumes designed by *Vogue's* fashion artist, René Bouché, it makes a charming closing ballet for the repertoire.

Somewhere in its transition to this company it has lost the wit and bite of the original and this is particularly noticeable in the dancing by the *corps*. Perhaps when this company is more familiar with this work they will put more life and bounce into it, but for the present, however, this amusing Tudor ballet lacks the gaiety given it by the Canadian dancers.

Hugh Laing makes an interesting young artist, Nora Kaye is delightful as the opera star and John Kriza makes a dashing nobleman. However, it is chiefly the performances of Scott Douglas as the young officer and Lupe Serrano as the imperious "Queen of the Carriage Trade" that bring this work alive. And certainly Bouché's lavish decor and costumes are always delightful to look at. Maybe some of the trouble is that by now a good many of us have had quite enough of the Can-Can.

Arthur Todd

VARIATIONS ON A THEME: *José Limón dancing with Pauline Koner in his own ballet.*
Photo: Radford Bascome

THEATRE PIECE NUMBER 2: *Ruth Currier with José Limón in Doris Humphrey's most recent work which is danced to an electronic tape recording and orchestral score by Otto Luening.*
Photo: Radford Bascome

Variations on a Theme

First given at the Juilliard School of Music on April 20, 1956. Choreography by José Limón. Costumes by Pauline Lawrence. Lighting by Tharon Musser. Music, *Variations on a Theme* **(1956) by Norman Dello Joio.**

"*To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven*"; Entire company.
"*A time to be born, and a time to die*"; JOSE LIMON.
"*a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted*"; LUCAS HOVING with RICHARD FITZ-GERALD, MICHAEL HOLLANDER, HARLAN McCALLUM.
"*A time to kill*"; JOSE LIMON.
"*and a time to heal*"; PAULINE KONER with HARLAN McCALLUM.
"*a time to break down, and a time to build up*"; RICHARD FITZ-GERALD, HARLAN McCALLUM, MICHAEL HOLLANDER, JOHN BARKER, CHESTER WOLENSKI.
"*a time to keep silence and a time to speak*"; LUCAS HOVING and LAVINA NIELSEN.
"*a time to mourn; . . . A time to weep,*" BETTY JONES, RUTH CURRIER, LAVINIA NIELSEN.
"*a time to laugh, . . . a time to dance*"; PAULINE KONER with BETTY JONES, RUTH CURRIER, LAVINIA NIELSEN, RICHARD FITZ-GERALD, MICHAEL HOLLANDER, HARLAN McCALLUM.
"*a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing*"; JOSE LIMON, PAULINE KONER.
"*a time of hate, a time of war*"; BETTY JONES and Company.
"*A time to love, a time of peace.*" RUTH CURRIER and Company.

OF the four works premiered during the series of two weekend performances at the Juilliard School of Music, this new, large dance work by José Limón was far and away the most noteworthy although, it must be added, the New York daily Press were even more enthusiastic over the two new works by Doris Humphrey that were also presented during this series.

Set to a melodious and beautiful score, commissioned from Norman Dello Joio, this series of danced sequences is based on the verses from *Ecclesiastes*, "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven."

What might well be trite or banal in other hands comes to glowing life as choreographed by José Limón. This work is almost architectural in concept with much of its construction arising from a series of large circle dances with the themes growing out of and returning to this set of patterns. Throughout, the duos, trios and larger ensemble dances have been imaginatively conceived and danced by Limón, by guest-artist Pauline Koner, as well as by Betty Jones, Ruth Currier, Lavinia Nielsen, Lucas Hoving and other members of the ensemble.

Most certainly this is the major modern dance work of this year and it is also perhaps the greatest work conceived by José Limón since his *The Moor's Pavane*. And his own dancing more than maintains his predominate position as the greatest male dancer in his field. Visually, this is a beautiful work, it has great simplicity and majesty, as befits its theme and, most important of all, it touches the heart deeply.

Theatre Piece Number 2

First given at the Juilliard School of Music on April 20, 1956. Choreography by Doris Humphrey. Sets and costumes by William Sherman. Lighting by Tharon Musser. Music, electronic tape recording and orchestral score, by Otto Luening.

Part 1: *In the Beginning*
Voice on Tape ETHEL LUENING, JOSE LIMON, PAULINE KONER, LUCAS HOVING, RUTH CURRIER, BETTY JONES, LAVINIA NIELSEN.

Part 2: *Ritual* JOSE LIMON, RICHARD FITZ-GERALD, MICHAEL HOLLANDER, JOHN BARKER, HARLAN McCALLUM, ALVIN SCHULMAN, CHESTER WOLENSKI.

Part 3: *Satires from the Theatre*
Actors PAULINE KONER, LUCAS HOVING
Dancer .. .. .. BETTY JONES
Singer .. .. LAVINIA NIELSEN

Part 4: *Poem of Praise*
Soprano .. ANNETTE BROPHY
Narrator .. .. CARL WHITE
Poetry by .. .. MAY SWENSON
JOSE LIMON, RUTH CURRIER, PAULINE KONER, LUCAS HOVING, BETTY JONES, LAVINIA NIELSEN.

PROGRAMMED as "a concerto for light, movement, sound and voice," this new work brings into play all of the elements of the lyric and dramatic theatre which Doris Humphrey seeks to integrate into her choreography. This new work calls for a tape recorder as well as a full orchestral score, which was commissioned from Otto Luening by the Juilliard Musical Foundation for this current festival of American music. Conceived in four sections, the opening deals with the emergence of life; the second with primitive ritual; the third, and by far the most exciting, consists of theatrical satires of actors, a dancer, a singer; and the closing episode finds the group in a more optimistic mood in a poem of praise.

If this sounds somewhat confusing, it begins to give a literal idea of this work as it struck me. Having been a great admirer of Doris Humphrey's works for the past two decades, it would be pleasant to say that I found all of this as profound, meaningful and important as did the New York Press. While there were periods of great dance invention and some really superb dancing by José Limón and the other members of his company, the work was otherwise totally unintelligible to me. Nevertheless, the reception of this work by the Press and an enthusiastic first-night audience quite obviously make this a minority opinion.

Arthur Todd

Sadler's Wells Silver Jubilee

LIFE'S CYCLE COMPLETED: Robert Helpmann as Adam Zero with June Brae as Death. The final moment in Helpmann's Adam Zero *when man having been born and lived his life is taken by death.* *Photo: Mandinian*

Part 3—Sadler's Wells at Covent Garden

Over the past two months Clive Barnes has written about the Sadler's Wells Ballet from its beginnings up to the end of the war. This month he takes up the story, telling of the years which have seen the company achieve international status through having the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, as its London home and through the company's many tours abroad, particularly to America. Thus the company's first quarter-century is now complete.

Compiled by CLIVE BARNES

A daring assault

DURING the past two months in DANCE AND DANCERS; we have traced the story of the Sadler's Wells Ballet up to the end of the war and the preparations for the company's launching at Covent Garden bringing with it the beginning of the fourth phase in its development.

There has been a theatre on the Bow Street site ever since the first Covent Garden Theatre was opened in 1732. The second theatre was burnt down just a century ago this year, and the present opera house (the architect was Edward Barry) opened its doors in 1858.

Although during the Nineteenth Century ballet played some part in the theatre's history (the great period of Romantic ballet was, of course, based on Her Majesty's Theatre), Italian and German opera reigned supreme until the first visit of Diaghilev in 1911. From then onwards, apart from the 1914-18 war years, the Ballets Russes, in its various guises and disguises, shared the theatre's boards as a junior partner to the International seasons of opera. During the last war the theatre became a dance hall.

In the early part of 1944 the ground landlords of the theatre announced that they were prepared to grant a new lease that would enable the opera house to be restored to its proper use. The music publishers Boosey and Hawkes took a five years lease of the Opera House and rented it to a newly formed non-profit making company the Covent Garden Opera Trust. The arrangement carried with it an extraordinary provision by which any profit made by Boosey and Hawkes as leaseholders would be returned to the Trust, while any loss on the theatre side would be borne by the music publishers themselves.

The Trust worked in close association with the Arts Council (the successor to CEMA, a body that has been guaranteeing the Sadler's Wells Ballet against loss during most of the war) and when the original lease expired it was renewed by the Ministry of Works, so Covent Garden became a complete State Theatre. However the generosity and sense of public service shown by Boosey and Hawkes at the beginning of the Trust's activities should never be forgotten.

The first Chairman of the Covent Garden Trust was the great economist Lord Keynes. As the husband of the Diaghilev ballerina Lydia Lopokova, and as the former treasurer of the historic Camargo Society, Keynes had a deep interest in ballet. When negotiations between the Sadler's Wells Governors and the Covent Garden Trustees had come to a standstill it was Keynes's personal intervention that secured agreement on the transfer of the Sadler's Wells Ballet to the management of the Trust for a trial period of four years.

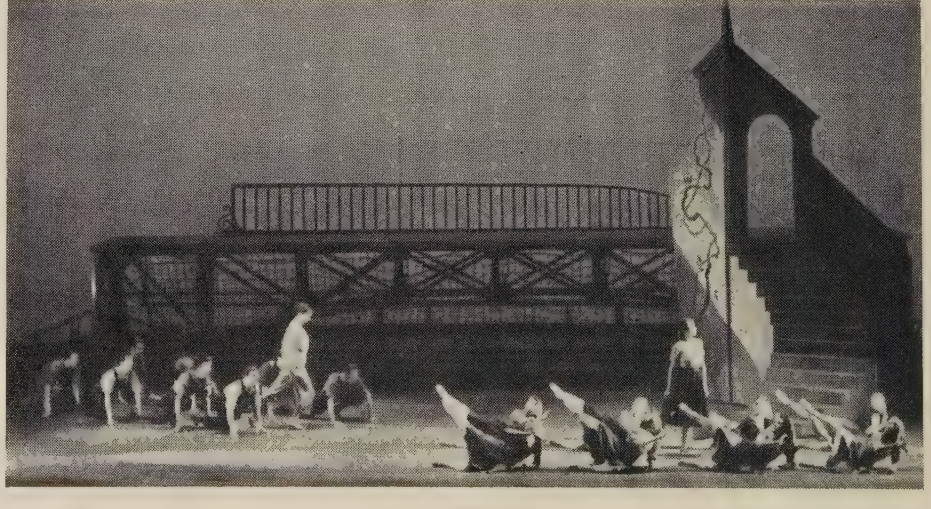
Sadler's Wells Theatre however found itself without a ballet company to appear in its operas, and so, under the directorship of Ninette de Valois and the sponsorship of the Arts Council, the Governors of Sadler's Wells resuscitated de Valois' pre-war plan and formed a second company. This company, called the Sadler's Wells Opera Ballet, had the further function of discovering and developing young talent. The Assistant Director was Ursula Moreton and Peggy Van Praagh was appointed Ballet Mistress; its first appearance was on Boxing Day, 1945, in *The Bartered Bride*. The company's first full evening performance was given on April 8, 1946. An account of the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet's history will appear in a future issue of DANCE AND DANCERS, but although its story is closely connected with its parent company it is not, partly for reasons of space, included in the present survey.

The tasks confronting the Sadler's Wells Ballet on its assault on Covent Garden were immense. Superficially the company seemed in a healthy condition, but its natural development had been interrupted by the war and the strain of the past few years was beginning to make itself felt. Yet perhaps the biggest obstacle the company had to overcome was the one over which it had the least control—prejudice.

There were many ballet-goers who regarded Sadler's Wells in war-time in the same light as they looked at dried eggs or powdered milk. They considered it an unfortunate and strictly utility substitute for the real thing. Like any other war-time trial they bore it with good humour and even a kind of rueful affection, but the thought of the Sadler's Wells Ballet at Covent Garden was as repellent and as unlikely as corned beef at Claridges.

Nor, strangely enough, was this feeling confined entirely to the pre-war balletgoers. The huge new audience attracted during the war eagerly devoured all the ballet literature they could find; most of this literature dealt with the Ballets Russes, and its devotees were

ADAM ZERO: *Another scene from Helpmann's ballet showing some interesting use of the* corps de ballet *and also of the full size of the Covent Garden stage. Helpmann as Adam Zero and June Brae as The Bride.* *Photo: Mandinian*



desperately anxious to see the unpronounceable names and the fabulous, almost mythological ballets.

One can only conjecture what would have happened if, before Sadler's Wells had established their bridgehead at Covent Garden, a "Russian" company had appeared in London with a dozen top-line names and a ship-load of the old repertory. Personally I think such an event would have retarded the complete acceptance and possibly even the development of our national ballet by about ten years. Fortunately when the war ended, not only was the transport situation impossible and London theatres difficult to obtain, but the Ballets Russes themselves were as split up as a jig-saw puzzle. When our first post-war visitors came in 1946 certainly they led to a re-assessment of our standards in male dancing and decor, but at least they did not carry in their luggage the snob cachet of the glorious past, and Sadler's Wells were able to compete with them on level terms.

Dwelling in marble halls

1946—On February 20 the company entered the marble halls they had dreamt about for so long, and presented an entirely new production of *The Sleeping Beauty*. Overnight the company grew in stature and they filled the theatre in both senses. The scenery and costumes by Oliver Messel seemed magnificent after the years of austerity and the company's performance, although it would in no way measure up to its present standard, was breathtakingly adequate.

The first two new productions were *Adam Zero* and *Symphonic Variations*. *Adam Zero* made full and even sensational use of the Opera House's stage equipment and provided strong acting roles for Helpmann and June Brae (who appeared in it as guest artist) but had few other merits. *Symphonic Variations*, Ashton's and Fedorovitch's re-affirmation of the classical school, was however a masterpiece, and immediately secured a permanent place in the repertory.

The other new production of the first part of the year was a new *Giselle*, with decor and costumes by James Bailey. This was far less of a success than *The Sleeping Beauty*. Certain ballets from the old repertory were also introduced into the Opera House, some, like *Les Patineurs* settling down immediately, others, like *Hamlet*, appearing less at home in their new surroundings.

The dancers excelled themselves. Fonteyn opened out, her dancing revealing a whole new vista of promise. Pamela May gave many good performances as Aurora in *The Sleeping Beauty*, and Moira Shearer and Beryl Grey made surprisingly satisfying debuts in the same role. The male dancing was less gratifying. Helpmann and Somes were both injured for part of the season (Somes's injury causing the postponement of *Symphonic Variations*) but Turner, Rassine and David Paltenghi all did good work, and for the first time for some years there was the prospect of a virtuoso male dancer on the horizon, Brian Shaw. Before he was called up in the summer Shaw had created a role in *Symphonic Variations* and made a good beginning in *Les Patineurs*.

Although the company had been enlarged a few of the dancers did not make the journey to Bow Street, including Celia Franca, Peggy Van Praagh and Moyra Fraser. Among the new recruits undoubtedly the most important was the young Soviet dancer Violetta Prokhorova (Elvin) who first appeared with the company on the second night of its Covent Garden season. Another useful new entrant was the Canadian dancer Norman Thomson.

SYMPHONIC VARIATIONS: *Fonteyn, Henry Danton, Pamela May, Michael Somes, Moira Shearer and Brian Shaw in Ashton's most successful ballet of the immediate post-war period at Covent Garden. This work to César Franck music has remained in the repertoire ever since.* *Photo: Baron*

Alan Carter returned from the Forces, but, like Claude Newman before him, he elected to join the new company at Sadler's Wells.

After the summer holiday the company made a Provincial tour which included an appearance at the first Edinburgh Festival, and followed this with a highly successful visit to Vienna, the first of their post-war British Council tours.

The winter season opened with a new production of *Coppelia*, which had unfortunate decor and costumes by William Chappell. When this was followed hot-foot by another expensive failure *Les Sirènes* (a ballet most remarkable for Helpmann's singing and Alexander Grant's solo debut) wise tongues started wagging to the effect that it was easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a State-supported ballet company to achieve the success Les Ballets des Champs-Elysées dangled on a shoe-string.

Henry Danton, Gordon Hamilton and Brian Shaw had all left the company. Shaw and Danton had their places in *Symphonic Variations* taken by Grant and John Hart, who made his first appearance on his return from the Forces as Frantz in *Coppelia*. John Field, Philip Chatfield and Ray Powell had also, by now, been released from the Forces. At the beginning of the winter season Pamela May suffered another serious injury, her place as Swanilda being taken by Shearer. Margaret Dale also made her debut as Swanilda, and, during the Edinburgh Festival, Avril Navarre gave a solitary performance of Aurora in *The Sleeping Beauty*.

Creations: *Adam Zero* (Helpmann-Bliss-Roger Furse) with Helpmann, Brae, Paltenghi, Rassine and Gillian Lynne; *Symphonic Variations* (Ashton-Franck-Fedorovitch) with Fonteyn, May, Shearer, Somes, Shaw and Danton; *Les Sirènes* (Ashton-Berners-Beaton) with Fonteyn, Helpmann, Ashton, Dale, Rassine, Grey, Somes, Edwards and Grant.

Revivals: *The Sleeping Beauty* (Petipa, rev. Sergueeff-Tchaikowsky-Messel) with Fonteyn, Helpmann, Grey, May, Rassine, Shearer, Lynne, Negus, Clayden, Dale, Gerd Larsen, Somes, Turner, Danton, Ellis, White, Hamilton, Anthony Burke, Stanley Holden, Edwards, Paul Reymond, Farron and David Davenport; *Coppelia* (Petipa and Cecchetti, rev. Sergueeff-Delibes-Chappell) with Fonteyn, Rassine, Helpmann, Clayden and Grey.

LES SIRÈNES: *Cecil Beaton's Mediterranean watering-place which provided the environment for Ashton's elaborate comedy ballet which proved too subtle for the large opera house.* *Photo: Baron*

EXOTIC TRIO: Helpmann as Adelino Canberra, Fonteyn as La Bolero and Turner as King Hihat of Agpar in a scene from Ashton's Les Sirènes. *The latter role was originally created by Ashton himself. Photo: Baron*

THE FAIRY QUEEN: Moira Shearer and Beryl Grey in the finale of Purcell's masque for which Ashton created the ballet scenes. Helpmann appeared in the acting role of Oberon in this production. Photo: Mandinian

Massine revivals

1947—The year opened well with the award of the C.B.E. to Ninette de Valois in the New Years Honours List. The Covent Garden Opera Trust had by now formed the nucleus of the permanent opera company, and it was decided to give it a run in with Lambert's edition of Purcell's *The Fairy Queen*. The ballet took a prominent part in this; Ashton was part producer and choreographer, Helpmann played Oberon and the full company, including Fonteyn and Somes, appeared in the ballet scenes.

1947 was Massine's year. The famous Russian choreographer first returned to England after the war in 1946 to appear in a play (which included in its action three ballets!) *A Bullet in the Ballet*. This production died in the Provinces without reaching London, and de Valois at once invited Massine to work with the Sadler's Wells company at Covent Garden. The offer accepted, Massine first mounted revivals of *The Three-Cornered Hat* and *La Boutique Fantasque*, dancing his original roles in each production.

Massine's engagement offered a great stimulus to the company. Apart from the inevitable fillip a company obtains from working with a fresh choreographer (intensified a hundredfold when the choreographer in question is world-famous) Massine's working with the company gave tangible and symbolic proof to both audience and company that the Wells were at last at grips if not on terms with the legend of the pre-war Ballets Russes. The Massine ballets required an entirely new style of character dancing from the company, and the Wells met their demands with astonishing success.

The dancers of the company were developing well. The principals were acquiring a new assurance, and the junior dancers, including Elvin, Dale, Lynne, Navarre, Hart, Field, Thomson, Grant and Chatfield were making their presence felt. Gilbert Vernon, Henry Legerton and, during the summer, Alfred Rodrigues, joined the company, June Brae returned, and Rosemary Lindsay and Kenneth Melville were notable in the *corps de ballet*. At the end of the 1946-7 season David Paltenghi, who had given the company exceptional service during the war, left, giving his last performance in the title-role in *Hamlet*.

During the summer the company undertook a more extensive European tour than hitherto, again under the auspices of the British Council. While they were away Covent Garden invited Col. de Basil to bring his somewhat debilitated troupe to Covent Garden, and so, unconsciously but effectively, did much to scotch the legend of "Russian" superiority. Unfortunately in the widespread reversal of opinion the very real achievements of the pre-war Ballets Russes tended to become overlooked.

After the European tour the Wells suffered a loss which it has never completely made good —the resignation of Constant Lambert from his post as Musical Director.

The first new production of the autumn season was a revival, slightly revised, of *Checkmate*, which had never been seen since it was left behind in Holland in 1940. Some conception of the company's strength can be given by the fact that in little over a week after the ballet's first production there were seen three Black Queens, May, Grey and Elvin, and three Red Knights, Turner, Somes and Rassine. *Checkmate* was followed by a new version of a Massine ballet, *Mam'zelle Angot*, never before seen in this country. It was in this ballet that Grant rode to stardom. Like the two previous Massine productions it proved invaluable in the repertory, and although it was not nearly such a good ballet as *La Boutique Fantasque* it proved better suited to the English dancers.

Turner, who was incomparably the best male classical technician British ballet had at that time produced, showed at Covent Garden a remarkable flair for character dancing. He followed his success in *The Rake's Progress* by assuming Massine's own roles in *The Three-Cornered Hat* and *La Boutique Fantasque*.

Creations: *Mam'zelle Angot* (Massine-Le Cocq/Jacob-Derain) with Fonteyn, Grant, Shearer, Somes, Hart, White and Ellis.

Revivals: *The Three-Cornered Hat* (Massine-Falla-Picasso) with Massine, Fonteyn, Hart and Grant; *La Boutique Fantasque* (Massine-Rossini/Respighi-Derain) with Massine, Shearer, Farron, Turner, Rassine, White, Elvin, Somes, Clayden, Grant, Hart and Legerton; *Checkmate* (de Valois-Bliss-Mc-Knight Kauffer) with May, Turner, Hamilton, Farron, Hart, Ellis and Field.

Film brings success

1948—This was possibly the year that established the Sadler's Wells Ballet as one of the great companies of the world. It also marked the climax of the ballet boom that had started during the war, the peak being reached with the distribution of the film *The Red Shoes* which rocketed its star, Moira Shearer, to international fame and made ballet more fashionable (in the popular rather than sophisticated sense) than it had been for a hundred years.

At the beginning of the year the first important group of dancers entered the company from the Theatre Ballet. Although Grant had been transferred in the Theatre Ballet's earliest days, and one or two useful dancers, including John Cranko, had gone into the Covent Garden *corps* following an initial spell in the Theatre Ballet, Anne Heaton, Nadia Nerina and Donald Britton were the first dancers to come to Covent Garden as soloists and with already sizeable reputations.

The first new production of the year was Ashton's *Scènes de Ballet*. This work, apart from its considerable intrinsic value, proved an interesting sign of the times. The Wells had been made forcibly aware by Les Ballets des Champs-Elysèes that British ballet design was poor in comparison with the French, and *Scènes de Ballet* used (not, incidentally, to remarkably good effect) the Champs Elysées designer André Beaurepaire.

The new ballet also showed the beginnings of the slow rise in the standard of post-war British male dancing. British male dancing was at this time under pretty constant attack, the attack not infrequently concentrating itself on the company's *premier danseur*. Although Helpmann was a good partner and a supreme artist his dance technique, even at the peak of his career, was almost pitiably weak for a dancer leading a great company. In *Scènes de Ballet* Fonteyn was again partnered by Somes, who at this time, often while Helpmann was away from the company, sometimes partnered her in *Giselle* and *Swan Lake*. The whole question of male standards was clearly one that would be settled by time; there was plenty of promise in the organisation, as was shown by the dancing of Somes, Britton, Chatfield, Field and Grant in the new ballet.

The company had recently acquired the services of the Latvian ballet-master Harijs Plucis, who had previously been principal dancer of the Latvian Ballet of Osvald Lemanis. Plucis, as his first task, rehearsed and slightly revised the production of *Swan Lake*.

In the late spring and early summer Covent Garden buzzed with activity. In May, at the first of the now annual Gala Performances

given in aid of the Benevolent Fund, *Job* was revived, with new settings and costumes by John Piper. Also at this gala Markova and Dolin, dancing in the *Don Quichotte Pas de Deus*, re-appeared in England for the first time since the war. This was followed by a series of guest appearances by Markova and Dolin. Markova, particularly by her performances in *Giselle*, *The Sleeping Beauty* and *Les Sylphides*, conquered a new generation of admirers, and was magnificently aided, abetted and supported by Dolin, who also enjoyed an individual triumph in his original role of Satan in *Job*.

During the first part of the Markova-Dolin visit, Fonteyn was in Paris as a guest star with Roland Petit. On her return she danced as never before; to one spectator at least she seemed to have crossed the bridge separating the good from the great, she was not just improved she was transformed.

The new production of that summer, Massine's first entirely original ballet for the company, *Clock Symphony*, flopped rather badly, and was not to be saved even by Bénard's sets and costumes. This expensive little piece of *chinoiserie* was withdrawn after this one season.

The company continued to build up its European reputation. During the spring it had already paid a brief visit to Holland (with less disastrous results than in 1940) and after the summer holidays and a visit to the Edinburgh Festival, the Wells gave a season in Paris. This was well rather than rapturously received. After Paris the company appeared in Düsseldorf and Hamburg.

The 1948–9 season opened late, Ashton's new ballet *Don Juan* being given on the first night of the season. This work showed the influence of the French ballet in its treatment. Fonteyn had the leading role, but injured her foot on the opening night and never danced it again at Covent Garden, her place being taken by Elvin. On the first night Shaw returned to the company, as the Blue Skater in *Les Patineurs*. It is of interest that by this time the Blue Skater had been entirely given over to the younger dancers and was also danced by Britton and Michael Boulton, who had just joined the company from the Theatre Ballet.

The injury to Fonteyn interfered with Ashton's plans for the first British full-evening ballet *Cinderella*, as Fonteyn was to have had the title-role. As it was impossible to postpone its première, scheduled for just before Christmas, Ashton rehearsed the ballet without Fonteyn (some of the choreography was worked out on Anne Heaton) and the first performance was given by Shearer. The scenario followed fairly closely that devised by the composer Prokofiev for the original Soviet production, and the decor and costumes were by another French designer, Jean-Denis Malclès.

The ballet proved immediately popular with audiences and was well-received by the Press. British ballet had proved itself capable of producing a choreographer capable of creating a full-evening ballet, even if Sadler's Wells Ballet had yet to find a British composer who was able and willing to write a full-length ballet score. The ballet, which included some of Ashton's best choreography, was capitally performed, and the dancing of Somes, Grant, Field, Chatfield, Melville and Macmillan (the latter having recently joined from the Theatre Ballet) gave further evidence that British male dancing was reviving from its torpor.

Creations: *Scènes de Ballet* (Ashton-Stravinsky-Beaurepaire) with Fonteyn, Somes, Britton, Chatfield, Field and Grant; *Clock Symphony* (Massine-Haydn-Bérard) with Shearer, Grant, Turner, Britton, Heaton, Powell, Somes, Rassine and Hart; *Don Juan* (Ashton-R. Strauss-Burra) with Fonteyn, Helpmann, Shearer and Ellis; *Cinderella* (Ashton-Prokofiev-Malclès) with Shearer, Somes, Ashton, Helpmann, Grant, May, Nerina, Elvin, Clayden and Grey.

Revivals: *Job* (de Valois-Vaughan Williams-Piper) with Helpmann, Rassine, David Davenport, Jean Bedells, Britton, Grant, Powell, Hart, Somes, Field, White, Legerton and Paul Reymond.

Danilova as guest

1949—A year more important historically then creatively, the year Sadler's Wells extended its activities to America.

The only new productions of the first part of the year were revivals of *A Wedding Bouquet* and *Apparitions*.

Elvin danced the title-role in *Cinderella*, and Fonteyn appeared in the ballet for the first time when she returned in February.

In March Alexandra Danilova, Frederic Franklin and Massine appeared with the company as guest artists. Although Danilova had the misfortune to sustain a slight injury soon after her arrival and was consequently not always at her best she made a great impression in *Coppelia* and *La Boutique Fantasque*. The versatile Franklin gave a number of good performances, but it was regrettable that the original intention for him to appear in *The Rake's Progress* was subsequently abandoned.

In the summer the company took part in the Florence May Music Festival, where among the repertory *Cinderella* enjoyed a surprise success.

For some time the American impresario Sol Hurok had been hoping to take the company to America. After protracted negotiations it was agreed that the Sadler's Wells should make an American tour, opening at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York in October.

In August the company gave a special month's season at Covent Garden in preparation for the tour. During this season *Façade*, which was included in the American repertory at the special request of Hurok, was revived, and Leslie Hurry designed new settings for *Swan Lake*, which unfortunately were no improvement on his earlier designs.

It was the success of this American tour that set the seal on the Sadler's Wells Ballet as a great international company. It opened its season with *The Sleeping Beauty* (conducted by Lambert, who was guest conductor throughout the New York season) and received a triumphant reception. Fonteyn was singled out as a "ballerina among ballerinas" (one still wonders *just* what that meant!) but the whole company shared in her victory over the New York public and Press.

Three things about this first visit stand out however. Firstly the success was predominantly won by the full-length classical repertory. Secondly public interest appeared to be centred more on Fonteyn, Shearer and, to a slightly lesser extent, Grey than on the rest of the company. Lastly the company was backed to the hilt by Hurok's remarkable publicity machine, which, barring catastrophe, had done everything it reasonably could to ensure a triumph before the curtain rose on the opening night.

After ending the North American tour in Montreal the company returned to England in time to open their Covent Garden season on Boxing Day. Appropriately enough the ballet given was *Cinderella*, which might have been sub-titled for the occasion: "From rags to riches."

Revivals: *A Wedding Bouquet* (Ashton-Berners/Stein-Berners) with Helpmann, Dale, Shearer, Nye, Brae, Turner, Ellis, Farron, Powell, Larsen, Edwards, Somes and Annette Page ; *Apparitions* (Ashton-Liszt/Lambert-Beaton) with Helpmann, Fonteyn, Turner and Field ; *Façade* (Ashton-Walton-Armstrong) with Ashton, Shearer, Nerina, Boulton, Britton, Heaton, Edwards, Ellis, Chatfield, April Olrich, Dorothea Zaymes and Vernon.

Balanchine and Petit

1950—The company soon got back into their stride after the American tour and proceeded to give some remarkably good performances. Three new ballets were presented. De Valois's *Don Quixote* was perhaps too literary ever to become generally very popular, but the company's next creation, *Ballet Imperial*, was extremely well received. For some time many people had felt that the company should extend its repertory by inviting ballets from distinguished contemporary choreographers, and the choice of Balanchine was warmly welcomed. In fact *Ballet Imperial* was a revival of a ballet Balanchine had previously produced in America. It was a fine example of his plotless *genre*, and, considering the style was alien to them and rehearsal time limited, the company danced it remarkably well.

The other creation *Ballabile* was less distinguished. However for it the Spanish artist Clavé, a discovery of the ballet's choreographer Petit, produced some of the best costumes and sets ever seen at Covent Garden

MAM'ZELLE ANGOT ALOFT: Fonteyn in the title role of Massine's ballet, borne aloft by soldiers, while Alexander Grant, as the Barber, jumps for joy. The happy ending to a ballet which, more than any other, established Grant as one of our leading character dancers.

Photo: Mandinian

before or since, and the performance the ballet received from its small cast was exceptionally invigorating.

On May 15 Ninette de Valois did one of the most astonishing things of her career. She celebrated the twenty-first anniversary of the company with a gala performance. The performance, which was given at the Sadler's Wells Theatre, was memorably unique and brought back to the stage many of the dancers who had been associated with the company since its earliest days. Unfortunately, through a miscalculation, the celebration was a year too early and no one noticed until it was too late. However, it was a wonderful party!

At the end of the season Harold Turner and Palma Nye left after many years' service. Turner's comparatively early retirement, to take up a teaching post at the Wells School, was particularly sad. He was a remarkably fine dancer, and did much to raise the standard and virility of English dancing by his notable example. In the Birthday Honours Ashton was awarded the C.B.E.

The success of the first American tour had led to the immediate offer of a return visit for an even longer period, and it was decided that the company should undertake an extended tour of North America starting in the autumn. Before the beginning of the tour the company gave a brief farewell season at Covent Garden, sandwiched in between the seasons of two welcome American visitors to London, New York City Ballet and Ballet Theatre. It was during this season, incidentally, that Helpmann's two famous dramatic ballets, *Miracle in the Gorbals* and *Hamlet*, were given by the company for the last time.

The New York season went much as the previous year. The biggest success was still reserved for the full-length classics, although the company's production of *Giselle*, which had not previously been seen in America, was not much liked. Both Fonteyn and Shearer received good notices, Shearer's Giselle (a role she had assumed for the first time earlier in the year) being preferred in many quarters to Fonteyn's.

One of the significant events of the tour (the whole of which was later celebrated in a book by Franklin White, *The Sadler's Wells Ballet goes Abroad*) was the unexpected resignation of Robert Helpmann in November, when the tour was only half-way through.

Helpmann's importance to the company during the first 20 years of its existence can never be over-estimated. All through the war years he possibly as much as anyone except de Valois was responsible for the company's continuance. Even after Fonteyn had matured into a great ballerina, Helpmann was always the real star of the company; although he was less of a dancer and more of an actor his position in ballet can only justly be compared with Massine's. Nevertheless while his departure left a gap which has never been filled (nor, in fairness, has it really been necessary for it to be filled) the company would doubtless have developed upon rather different lines had he remained as *premier danseur*. His resignation marked the end of another phase in the company's history.

Creations: *Don Quixote* (de Valois-Roberto Gerhard-Burra) with Helpmann, Fonteyn, Grant, Edwards, Powell, Turner, May, Rassine, Farron and Hart; *Ballabile* (Roland Petit-Chabrier/Lambert-Antoni Clavé) with Elvin, Anne Negus, Navarre, Heaton, Dale, Grant, Chatfield, Melville, Macmillan, and Vernon.

Revival: *Ballet Imperial* (Balanchine-Tchaikovsky-Eugene Berman) with Fonteyn, Somes, Grey, Field, Macmillan, Nerina and Clayden.

A stormy year

1951—What goes up must come down, and in 1951 the Sadler's Wells Ballet went down.

The year started well with de Valois being created a Dame in the New Years Honours List, and the company returning to Covent Garden having netted more than 500,000 dollars. In the absence of Helpmann, Shearer was promoted and shared equal billing with Fonteyn.

Not unexpectedly the company was tired after its protracted tour, and its performance schedule did not allow for a long holiday. There were a number of casualties, notably Shearer, Grey and May, and the level of performances flagged.

Yet the storm of abuse that was hurled this year at ballet in general and the Sadler's Wells Ballet in particular, was not entirely justified by performances. Fashion was swinging away from ballet, it was no longer the ideal evening out for the thoughtless (who in any case were just about to discover the "telly" and the evening in) nor was it now the perfect social chit-chat for the psuedo-intellectual smarties, and it was the latter set, especially those of them who happened to be ballet critics, who started to make the fuss.

CLOCK SYMPHONY: *Moira Shearer as The Princess and Alexander Grant as the Clockmaker with Harold Turner as the Prince and Donald Britton as the Duke in a moment from Massine's ballet to Haydn's symphony. The most notable feature of this work was the designing of Christian Bérard.* *Photo: Baron*

Curiously enough the storm was started off by *Daphnis and Chloe*, the finest narrative ballet of Ashton's career to date, and one of the most distinguished works ever presented by the company. But plenty of people were tired of the achievements of Sadler's Wells, and in Fleet Street while it was not news to say ballet was alive and kicking, to say it was on its last legs was well worth a paragraph or two. *Daphnis and Chloe*, popular with the audience, particularly the gallery audience, from the first, collected a shockingly bad batch of Press notices.

The sniping continued intermittently until the summer. This was the year of the Festival of Britain and the company was to give a special summer season at Covent Garden, during which *Tiresias*, a ballet commissioned for the Festival by the Arts Council, was first produced. Unhappily, largely because of the unsuitability of Lambert's scenario, this, despite a felicitous second scene and a remarkable score by Lambert himself, was as dull as ditchwater, and its puerility, which might normally have escaped much comment, was attacked unmercifully. The attacks took on a personal edge and were soon directed at Dame Ninette and the company's artistic direction. Everyone seemed to know how to do the director's job, and one or two even contrived to suggest, with becoming modesty, that they themselves might be open to an offer.

Soon after the ballet's production Lambert died. Immediately there was a vulgar brawl in the Press as to whether his death had been caused or hastened by the unfavourable reception accorded his last ballet. But disregarding that tasteless controversy, Lambert's death was a cruel loss to British ballet. His integrity, intelligence and genius had always been at the service of Sadler's Wells. For their sake he probably sacrificed a more superficially fruitful career as a creative artist, certainly a more lucrative one as an orchestral conductor. Although he had resigned as Musical Director his abilities were still at the company's disposal until his death.

The company appeared at the Edinburgh Festival, and returned to Covent Garden without Fonteyn, who was injured, the company being led by Shearer. Fonteyn, who incidentally had been awarded the C.B.E. in the Birthday Honours, was badly missed, but the new production of *Giselle* was a distinct improvement on the old.

Following an autumn Provincial tour the company re-opened at Covent Garden for the winter season. Here they presented Massine's *Donald of the Burthens*. An attempt to do for bonny Scotland what *The Three-Cornered Hat* had done for sunny Spain, it failed most noticeably, despite the craftsmanship of some of Massine's choreography and the efforts of Grant and Grey in the leading roles.

It had been a bad year on the whole, yet individual dancers had shown up well. Elvin, who had already created a stir with Odette-Odile, did well with her first performances in *Giselle*. Grey and Shearer were polishing their classical roles, and Nerina, in both *Cinderella* and *Coppelia*, showed unmistakeable ballerina quality, while dancers like Lindsay and Rowena Jackson were moving to the fore. On the male side the situation was distinctly encouraging. Somes, Field and Hart were sharing the classical leads with increasing distinction, Grant and Shaw had reliable brilliance, and Chatfield, Macmillan, Melville (who danced Albrecht to Elvin's Giselle) and Vernon were all taking over important parts.

Creations: *Daphnis and Chloe* (Ashton-Ravel-John Craxton) with Fonteyn, Somes,

Elvin, Field and Grant; *Tiresias* (Ashton-Constant Lambert-Isabel Lambert) with Somes, Fonteyn, Field, Dale, Clayden, Shaw, Larson and Rodrigues; *Donald of the Burthens* (Massine-Ian Whyte-Robert Colquhoun and Robert MacBryde) with Grant, Grey, Shaw, Edwards and Farron.

Revivals: *Giselle* (Coralli, rev. Sergueeff-Adam-Bailey) with Shearer, Rassine, Grey, Edwards, Chatfield, Macmillan and Jackson.

All British choreography

1952—*The Sleeping Beauty* was re-furbished early in the new year. Among the changes, which included a new Vision Scene variation for Aurora, the most significant was the introduction of a male variation for the Prince. Aurora was danced by Grey, Elvin, Nerina and Lindsay, the two last named making their debuts in the role. Lindsay was partnered at some performances by Chatfield, and Vernon and Macmillan both danced Bluebird.

Fonteyn returned in February, and in March the company presented the first ballet by Andrée Howard to be given at Covent Garden, *A Mirror for Witches*. This was a strong, dramatic ballet, which although not meeting with much general favour had much to commend it, not the least being the performances of Anne Heaton, and later April Olrich, in the leading role.

1951 which had been disastrous at Covent Garden, had been a vintage year for the Theatre Ballet. Largely instrumental in this success was the young choreographer John Cranko. The next natural step was to let him try his hand at working with the Covent Garden company. His first ballet for the main company was *Bonne-Bouche*, and was produced following a brief visit by the company to Portugal. The designs were by Osbert Lancaster, who had already collaborated with Cranko on *Pineapple Poll*. The ballet was a good, light-hearted romp, neither substantial nor permanent, but full of ideas.

During the autumn Ashton presented his second full-length ballet. Once again he used an existing score, this time Delibes' *Sylvia*. The ballet was elaborate and expensive, the company had been going through a very difficult patch, and Ashton had not made a ballet for the Wells since the ill-fated *Tiresias*. It was essential that *Sylvia* prove a success. Fortunately it was. It contained long passages of excellent choreography, and gave Fonteyn a wonderful opportunity to display her individual qualities. The ballet also indicated the fine progress that had been made by Somes since he had been appointed *premier danseur*. He had been studying with Volinine in Paris, and at last showed the extent of his abilities. The ballet was also danced by Grey and Chatfield, Elvin and Field, and Nerina and Rassine. There were also numerous alternative casts in the smaller roles.

From the production of *Sylvia* the company have not yet looked back. An unfortunate and prolonged illness to Fonteyn clouded the end of the year, but Dame Ninette's production of *Swan Lake*, with additional choreography by Ashton and herself and most effective new designs by Leslie Hurry, was widely acclaimed. The first performance was danced by Grey and Field. Later, Nerina and Rassine and Jackson and Somes appeared in the leading roles. This marked Jackson's debut in a ballerina role.

Svetlana Beriosova had by now joined the company from the Theatre Ballet, slipping in unannounced as the Lilac Fairy in a performance of *The Sleeping Beauty*. Later she appeared in *Coppelia*.

Creations: *A Mirror for Witches* (Howard-Denis ApIvor-Norman Adams) with Heaton, Hart, Chatfield, Farron, Edwards, Dale and Joan Benesh; *Bonne-Bouche* (Cranko-Arthur Oldham-Lancaster) with Clayden, Shaw, Grant, May, Hart and Legerton; *Sylvia* (Ashton-Delibes-Robin and Christopher Ironside) with Fonteyn, Somes, Hart, Grant, Farron, Clegg, Shaw and Clayden.

Revival: *Swan Lake* (Petipa and Ivanov, rev. Sergueeff and de Valois-Tchaikovsky-Hurry) with Grey, Field, Jackson, Clayden, Shaw, Farron, Grant, Lindsay, Mary Drage, Beriosova, Melville and Chatfield.

SCÈNES DE BALLET: *Fonteyn and Somes with the* corps de ballet *in one of the many beautiful groupings which abound in this Ashton work to Stravinsky music. This ballet, which was a development of Ashton's* Symphonic Variations *genre, was not too well received at the outset but it has grown in popularity, especially with the connoisseurs.* *Photo: Roger Wood*

Markova returns

1953—In February the ballet company collaborated with the Covent Garden opera in Gluck's *Orpheus*, produced by Ashton. This was a beautiful and tragic production. Before the first night Sophie Fedorovitch, the designer, died, and the production later had to be abandoned after only two performances owing to the illness of Kathleen Ferrier, which also proved fatal. The leading dancers were Beriosova and Grant.

The death of Fedorovitch was another severe blow to the company. She had been associated with Ashton ever since she designed his first ballet, and her advice was eagerly sought on many subjects.

The continued absence of Fonteyn was to an extent mitigated by the presence of two guest artists, Shearer and Markova. Shearer appeared first but had to curtail her engagement owing to injury. These were her last performances with her old company, and although she subsequently danced a little with Festival Ballet she later announced her final retirement from the ballet stage and her decision to concentrate on acting. A most promising dancer in the beginning, for various reasons Shearer's early promise went largely unfulfilled. We never saw the ballerina she might had been had her development been slower and her films fewer.

Markova danced only in *Giselle*, *Swan Lake*, *Act* 2, both partnered by Somes, and *Les Sylphides*, partnered by Field, but in these seemed the same as ever.

Fonteyn's return, after nearly six months absence, assumed the proportions of a gala, and she was soon back dancing as well as ever.

The season saw three new ballets. A second ballet by Cranko, *The Shadow*, gave Beriosova her first important creation at Covent Garden, and has proved a permanent addition to the repertory. Andrée Howard's *Veneziana*, a *divertissement* with decor and costumes by Fedorovitch (she finished the designs just before her death), was choreographically a little thin and did not wear well, despite its charming Donizetti music and well-contrived carnival "theme."

The third ballet of the season was Ashton's *Homage to the Queen*, and was first produced on Coronation night. A brilliant opera-house *divertissement* it demonstrated the full strength of the company in choreography of unflagging originality and invention. Unfortunately the decor and costumes would have killed a lesser ballet stone dead, and continue to detract from its excellence.

The company made their third tour to America in the autumn. Beryl Grey did not go with the company as she was to become a mother. David Blair joined the company from the Theatre Ballet, and at the same time Macmillan and Vernon left to accept senior soloist positions with the Theatre Ballet.

The third New York season was remarkable not only for the new superlatives piled upon Fonteyn, but also for the almost universal acceptance of Ashton as a great choreographer. *Daphnis and Chloe*, *Homage to the Queen* and *Sylvia* were the hits of the season, and for the first time there were few complaints about either the quality of native ballets or the standard of the male dancing.

Creations: *The Shadow* (Cranko-Dohnanyi-Piper) with Beriosova, Chatfield, Lindsay, Bryan Ashbridge, Shaw, Desmond Doyle and Ronald Hynd; *Veneziana* (Howard-Donizetti/ApIvor-Fedorovitch) with Elvin, Powell, Shaw, Clegg, Clayden and Jackson; *Homage to the Queen* (Ashton-Malcolm Arnold-Messel) with Nerina, Rassine, Clayden, Dale, Heaton, Boulton, Powell, Clegg, Elvin, Hart, Shaw, Farron, Jackson, Grey, Field, Grant, Beriosova, Lindsay, Ashbridge, Chatfield, Fonteyn and Somes.

A new Coppelia

1954—The company returned to England and produced a new production of *Coppelia:* a work which had been something of a *bête noire* for the Wells, despite a glittering array of Swanildas from Lopokova to May. Dame Ninette's production was to an extent influ-

(*continued on page 31*)

DAMES IN ATTENDANCE: Dame Ninette de Valois and Dame Margot Fonteyn (sitting on floor), together with Frederick Ashton, watch the early rehearsals on the Covent Garden stage of Birthday Offering. *With Fonteyn as the centre-piece of the divertissement, each ballerina has a solo designed to show her to her best advantage.*

BIRTHDAY REHEARSALS

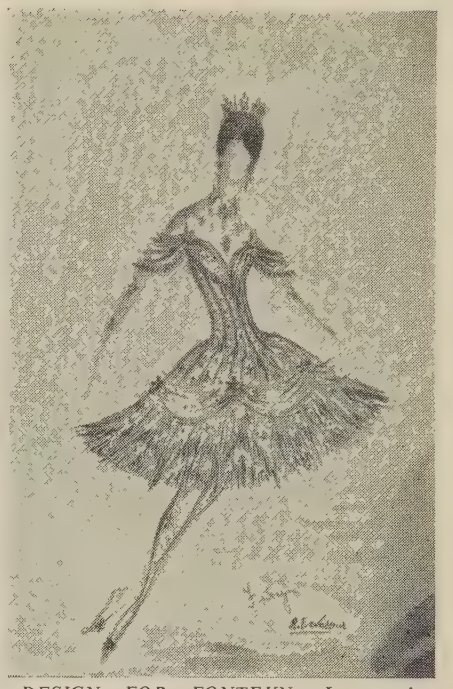
To celebrate the twenty-five years of the Sadler's Wells Ballet, Frederick Ashton created a unique ballet using all the Company's ballerinas and principal male dancers.

FONTEYN CORRECTED: Ashton places Fonteyn's arms for her variation. The work is very much in the style of Russian ballets at the end of the last century.

ONE MISSING: Violetta Elvin was away during some of the rehearsals, so Annette Page stood in for her. Fifield, Jackson, Beriosova, Fonteyn, Grey, Page and Nerina rehearse to the Glazunov Concert Waltz *which is used for the* entree *of the ballerinas. Photos: Barratt's*

DESIGN FOR FIFIELD: André Levasseur's costume which was similar to those for the other ballerinas except Fonteyn's.

DESIGN FOR SOMES: Each of the male dancers wore similar costumes, the main difference being the colour.



DESIGN FOR FONTEYN: Levasseur's yellow costume for the Ballerina Assoluta. Photos: Lido

Birthday Offering

A *Piece d'Occasion* in one scene, first given by the Sadler's Wells Ballet at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, on May 5, 1956. Choreography, Frederick Ashton; Music, Alexander Glazunov; Costumes, Andre Levasseur.

Cast

MARGOT FONTEYN
BERYL GREY VIOLETTA ELVIN NADIA NERINA
ROWENA JACKSON SVETLANA BERIOSOVA ELAINE FIFIELD
MICHAEL SOMES
ALEXANDER GRANT BRIAN SHAW PHILIP CHATFIELD
DAVID BLAIR DESMOND DOYLE BRYAN ASHBRIDGE

CHOREOGRAPHY

IN a modest speech at the conclusion of the Twenty-fifth Anniversary Gala which saw the première of *Birthday Offering*, Frederick Ashton deprecatingly pointed out that "Dame Ninette formed the team; all I had to do was kick off." Well this May 5 happened to be Cup Final Night and Ashton celebrated the double event by scoring the most sensational goal of his career.

Ashton has the rare gift of investing occasional pieces with a real sense of occasion; in *Homage to the Queen* and even more in this latest tremendous trifle he shows himself to be like the Renaissance painters who could turn out masterpieces to order. Apparently his muse needs no more bidding than a commission, and his talents for celebrationary creation could well be rewarded by some such title as Master of the Queen's Ballet or Choreographer Laureate.

Birthday Offering is in conception the simplest ballet Ashton has made since *Symphonic Variations*. It opens with an *entrée* and *ensemble* for its seven ballerinas and their cavaliers. This leads into seven variations for the ballerinas, followed by an *ensemble* for their partners. The ballet ends with a *pas de deux* for the *ballerina assoluta* and the *premier danseur étoile*, and a brief *finale for* all 14 dancers.

The ballet has no story, no theme, but a history—a history of 25 years of achievement. The *divertissement* to Glazunov music seems deliberately to evoke the spirit of Petipa and the Maryinsky, the spirit, re-animated by Ashton's own style of neoclassicism, that Sadler's Wells has been trying to capture since its foundation.

When Sadler's Wells first emerged rootless from the barren ground, de Valois realised the necessity of acquiring a tradition, of buying a past. She obtained, to change the metaphor, second-hand and slightly shop-soiled, part of the repertory of the Imperial Russian Ballet. This, done up and decked out, has become England's own ballet heritage. Ashton himself has been largely instrumental in forming the English style of dancing. It would be true to say that Sadler's Wells dance *The Sleeping Beauty* in the particular way they do partly because Ashton has created *Symphonic Variations* and the rest. The Russian tradition as seen through British eyes and Ashton's choreography are the two vital factors in the Sadler's Wells history. By bringing these two elements together, *Birthday Offering* at the same time commemorates and crowns the first 25 years of the company's existence.

Ashton is immensely successful not only in die-stamping each section of the choreography with the imprint of his personal style, but also at preserving choreographic unity within the complete ballet. So, for example, Grey's solo incorporates an arm-movement, a flirtatious flutter, that is taken straight out of the girl's variation in *Les Rendezvous*, other passages are pleasantly reminiscent of *Sylvia*, *Homage* and other Ashton ballets, but each part is unmistakeably from *Birthday Offering*.

All the time Ashton is delightfully inventive, creating with a young artist's zest and an old master's skill. The one place where he really breaks new ground is in the *ensemble* for the seven cavaliers. Throughout the ballet Ashton uses the uneven number of his cast to provide a governing pattern to the choreography's floor design. In the male mazurka, Somes acts as a centre-piece or fulcrum while his six colleagues dance around him.

Ashton achieves a superb impression of masculine power by rapidly shifting patterns, broad-spanned jumps and perfect cohesion. The pace of this dance is terrific, and the final climax with Somes executing a series of fast *doubles tours en l'air*, flanked by Blair and Doyle flashing round in a *pirouette à la seconde*, while the four other boys circle round this trio, also spinning, all this gives a new meaning to the phrase centrifugal force. Ashton has never used male dancers in quite this generous, sweeping way before, even though the germ of the idea is present in *Les Patineurs*.

The rest of the ballet is more typical of Ashton's style. The *ensemble* dances for the seven couples are rich and aristocratic. As the dancers enter, gliding in proud and erect, they immediately establish an atmosphere of regality. Ballet dancing divorced from drama can easily be inhuman, here it is super-human. Passion has been sublimated rather than destroyed and the dancers are like benevolently impersonal princelings gracefully playing in a well-ordered world.

In the variations the individual personalities of the ballerinas are allowed to come to the surface. These variations are contrasted with, and balanced against one another. The choreographer seems to create naturally for each dancer, though as might be expected not all the solos are of equal value.

The *pas de deux* has long been an Ashton speciality. His *pas de deux* are characterised by their beauty and warmth of human feeling. Many modern choreographers (notably Lifar and Massine) have aimed at a new plasticity in *pas de deux*, the two dancers being equal partners in an almost sculptural design.

Ashton is, in this at least, of the old school, and the male is magnificently un-emancipated, grave, courtly and attentive. The advantage of his approach is the manner in which it naturally introduces human emotions.

It was perhaps in *Cinderella* that Ashton,

ADAGIO FOR STARS: The full cast of Birthday Offering. *L. to R.: Shaw and Fifield, Doyle and Jackson, Ashbridge and Beriosova, Somes and Fonteyn, Grey and Chatfield, Elvin and Blair, Nerina and Grant.* *Photo: Roger Wood.*

following the example of Ivanov's *Swan Lake*, first succeeded in making a formal classical adagio completely expressive of human love. This success he has repeated, though never surpassed, in *Sylvia*, *Homage to the Queen* and *Romeo and Juliet*. The *pas de deux* in *Birthday Offering* is another glowing example of its type, in some ways the finest and most articulate of them all.

When it was first announced it seemed as though *Birthday Offering* was only to be given two performances. Owing to its great success it now appears that this supremely civilised ballet is to be taken into the repertory. If so, one hopes that it will be used sparingly and treated with respect, retained only for holidays and bonfire nights. It would be better for it merely to be remembered by the two performances it has had, than for it to be hacked out, under-rehearsed, under-cast, thrown together and torn apart. In ballet there are *still* fates worse than death.

DANCING

YOU will remember that when Mr. Lumley and Jules Perrot produced their famous *Pas de Quatre* they ran into certain difficulties over precedence and protocol. No such difficulties, I imagine, were encountered by de Valois and Ashton.

Here were 14 dancers (six English, three New Zealanders, two South African, one Australian, one Russian and one Lithuanian) all dancing together as a perfect *ensemble*. The group has temperament (if that word means anything) in abundance, but this was tamed and subjugated to the needs of the ballet as a whole. It was like the Vienna State Opera singing Mozart.

Ashton has always been able to compose fluently for individual dancers, indeed this is one of the yard-sticks of his, or anyone else's, choreographic craftsmanship. But Ashton's greatness in this direction lies not so much in his ability to exploit the best qualities of the dancers at his disposal, as in the manner in which he exposes, with a surgeon's care and an artist's love, the latent potentialities of his cast. He creates dancers at the same time as he creates dances.

Dancing together, representing the essence of classical ballet, they could be admired platonically. During the variations the spotlight fell on each ballerina in turn, revealing, exploring and exposing. One after another they danced: the sleek and withdrawn Fifield; Jackson, with her pert and good-humoured virtuosity; the mysteriously alluring Beriosova; Nerina (whose variation, incidentally, was, with its electric jumps and *double tour en l'air*, one of the sensations of the evening) with her irrepressible bounce; Elvin dancing with languorous grandeur; the open-handed and warm-hearted Grey; and Fonteyn, Queen of them all, queening it with the inbred dignity of divine right. The one small criticism that might be levelled against the performance was that some of the ballerinas did not bring quite enough individuality to their variations —but possibly to have gone any further in this direction would have been to have gone too far. Any hint of the atmosphere parodied in Tudor's *Gala Performance* would have been disastrous.

Finally let us mention the male dancers. Partnering their charges like consorts and dancing with a combined verve and brilliance, their seven names deserve ornamental lettering on some roll of honour. Seeing them taking their calls, gathered round Somes like a football team round their captain, perspiring and with the radiant happiness of successful athletes, one felt that English male dancing had irrevocably got somewhere, and that in future lilies will be reserved for bouquets.

Clive Barnes

BALLERINAS TOGETHER: Beriosova, Jackson, Fifield (who at the time of writing has not reached official ballerina status), Fonteyn, Nerina, Elvin and Grey. *Photo: Roger Wood.*

MUSIC

The score was taken from the following compositions of Glazunov:

Entrée—Valse de Concert, No.1.
Grand Adagio—Scènes de Ballet
Fifield's Variation—Scènes de Ballet
Jackson's Variation—Winter (Les Saisons)
Beriosova's Variation—Winter (Les Saisons)
Nerina's Variation—Winter (Les Saisons)
Elvin's Variation—Winter (Les Saisons)
Grey's Variation—Summer (Les Saisons)
Fonteyn's Variation—Ruse d'Amour

VIOLETTA ELVIN in her solo, the last dance she created for the Sadler's Wells Ballet, as she retired on June 23.

BERYL GREY in her solo in Birthday Offering. *Each ballerina had a variation to suit her particular qualities.*

Male Ensemble—Prelude and *Mazurka, orch. by Robert Irving*
Pas de Deux (Fonteyn and Somes)—Ruse d'Amour
Finale—Valse de Concert, as for *Entrée.*

DECOR

IF *Birthday Offering* calls itself a "pièce d'occasion," then André Levasseur should be called a "grand décorateur d'occasion." He seems to have a sense of fitness and grandeur that I have not seen in any designer, British or French, in the past quarter-century.

Before he designs anything he soaks himself in the music for the ballet in question. By this method he gives his work its wide range while at the same time managing to keep his own personal signature.

Presumably it was the Glazunov music that gave him the idea of designing tutus for the ballerinas that seem to have come straight from the Maryinsky Theatre of the days of Imperial Russia. I have before me some pictures of Olga Preobrajenska and Marie Petipa. The 19th-century ballerinas look charming in their knee-length skirts—every bit as charming as our own Wells ballerinas in the pictures on this and the preceding pages.

There is something exquisitely suited to dancing in this length of skirt. Never shall I get used to the display of muscular thighs and hips, however shapely, that are apparent under the majority of tutus worn in France and America today. Let us hope that Levasseur, following in the steps of Dior, his master, will lead the feminine world of ballet back to the older, more elegant line.

The costumes, as the pictures show, are elaborate, but the decoration is beautifully placed so that it enhances the line of each dancer.

The ballerinas each wear a different colour—Fifield is in grey, Beriosova in green, Nerina in orange, Jackson in scarlet, Elvin in violet, Grey in blue, and Fonteyn in gold. Each colour and each ballerina seemed to complement the other.

Apart from the concealing qualities of these skirts, the extra length caused them to move well. Nothing is more helpful to the dancer than if the dress accents the movement of the dance. With the usual pie-frill of a tutu the line of the dancer is not helped at all.

The seven cavaliers wore the same colours as the ballerinas they were partnering. Although their wide "leg o' mutton" sleeves gave them a good line when they were standing, and they did have to stand quite a time while the ballerinas danced their respective *soli*, the added width to their shoulders was not so attractive when they raised their arms. A little modification here would help. Nor did I particularly like the whisps of tulle which flowed from each shoulder at the back; such additions tend to blurr the line of a dancer's body in action. Otherwise they all looked very dignified and handsome.

The setting used for *Birthday Offering* was more occasional than "d'occasion." Unless my old eyes failed me, it seemed to consist of the chandeliers from *Veneziana* and some standard candelabra from *Homage to the Queen*. This is the kind of mock-up affair one usually associates with French concert ballet, and was no more acceptable for that. It is difficult to judge what kind of setting is the most suitable for these occasions, but possibly if the ballet is to be retained in the repertoire, the whole of Fedorovitch's *Veneziana* setting could be used.

Peter Williams

PAS BE DEUX: Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes in the beautiful pas de deux, *one of the finest Fredrick Ashton has yet created, which comes towards the end of the ballet. Photos: Roger Wood*

SHIRLEY BROUGHTON: One of the American Modern Dancers discussed in this article, Broughton believes that the Modern Dance is limited by the absence of a codified technique. She believes that it is necessary to perform dances with no reference to the emotonal impulses which originally prompted them.

Photo: Susan Greenberg

Transatlantic View: 3

More American Dancers and Their Work

by DAVID VAUGHAN

Last month, David Vaughan, a young dancer and choreographer who has worked and studied in America, wrote about American Modern Dance choreography with special reference to Martha Graham and Jose Limon. Now he discusses some other dancers and choreographers who are making a notable contribution to the American Modern Dance scene.

The pioneer spirit

SOME of the general comments on the modern dance in my previous article may have seemed harsh and even cynical to those who are under the innocent impression that this is an art that may be practised only by the most dedicated spirits. I fear, however, that the kind of modern dancing that I was complaining about flourishes in New York, a city where goodness knows what percentage of the population is undergoing psychiatric treatment, and where so many young people come who feel that they must be "creative" in some way—for these the modern dance is a heaven-sent form of self-expression because it may be practised after the minimum of study.

Of course, psychological insecurity and emotional exhibitionism are not the only elements that may be found in the American character, and it is a fact that modern dance was born of healtheir characteristics—the sturdy individualism, the desire to push back frontiers, to move without hindrance in a freer air, to build its own traditions. It is worth remembering that one of Martha Graham's earlier dances was called *Frontier*: she is a pioneer in the true American spirit.

But there is no doubt that one sometimes feels that the modern dance, which when it began knew no boundaries, has become a narrow world in which the audience at any given recital consists largely of all those who do not happen to be dancing. Although modern dancers will often accuse the ballet of being effete, a "hothouse plant," it is undeniable that ballet has the greater appeal to the public at large. When they see Tanaquil LcClercq or Jacques d'Amboise, they recognise them as Americans like themselves. Modern dance has reached this public only when used as the basis of musical comedy dancing—especially in the now fashionable so-called "jazz" style whose most original exponent in Broadway choreography is Bob Fosse. Many dancers who were once recitalists of the most uncompromising kind have found Broadway a much more profitable field.

Perhaps the reason why modern dance has succeeded so little in communicating to the public at large is not simply its frequent opacity, but also because though modern dance seems to be so austere and intense, there is a danger in this very intensity of a kind of sentimentality, an expression of emotion that is exaggerated and therefore false. The audience is apt to find this unmannerly, and while audiences have no objection to being moved, they dislike to be made uncomfortable. Modern dance, in short, is primarily an introverted art, and ballet an extroverted one, and we all know that introversion, if carried to excess, is deleterious.

There are, however, several modern dancers who have found the emotional expression to which most modern dancing is directed distasteful or aesthetically indefensible, and who have rejected or at any rate questioned the principles on which modern dance has hitherto been based. These dancers are, no doubt, at least as much in isolation as those whom one might call the first generation innovators—who regarded ballet as mere spectacle and deliberately sought a means of individual emotional expression. But just as ballet needs at the moment to enlarge its vocabulary by adopting some of the movement discoveries of the moderns, so modern dance has a better chance of survival if its creative artists will adapt for their own uses some of the relevant aesthetic and (especially) theatrical principles of ballet.

Sybil Shearer

NONE of these general remarks quite serves as an introduction to a discussion of the work of Sybil Shearer, for she is at once the most isolated and the most advanced of all the modern dancers; yet I believe that eventually she will prove to be one of the most influential in the development of a new kind of modern dancing.

The difficulty of describing dancing of any kind to someone who has not seen it is intensified when the attempt is made to describe Sybil Shearer. She is unique, and each of her dances is unique. She usually appears in New York once a season, when she gives a long solo recital. No one can ever guess in advance what her dances each year will be like, for Shearer's new dances are always unlike any dances that she or anyone else has ever done before. They are usually difficult, both in the sense that they require consummate technical skill for their performance and that they make no concessions to the spectator. Their technical difficulties are no problem to Shearer. I believe she could dance anything she liked.

As for their content, even though this may be obscure, it is not the wilful obscurantism that all too often disguises a common-place statement. Her dances are difficult because they have been refined down to the most simple and precise statement possible. Their poetry is a kind of pure lyrical utterance—a clear uncluttered serene precision. In this Sybil Shearer represents a return to a classic attitude towards dancing. She does not strive for poetry, the poetry is in the precision. This is a quality which she shares with Balanchine. Shearer has the quality of personal transparency that I believe all great dancers must have: she does not impose a personality between the spectator and the dance. You see through her into the dance, as it were. She seems always to be dancing each dance for the first time, yet her art is the very opposite of improvisation; she is always in complete control.

She is in a sense untheatrical, almost ascetically so. She wears no make-up, very often the pianist is there on the stage with her. Yet in other important respects she is absolutely theatrical—shs has created a kind of theatre of her own. Her costumes are of an extraordinary beauty and fantasy, her lighting illumines the dances in the fullest sense of the word. Her choice of music shows great taste and refinement, and when she has chosen a great piece (such as Ravel's *Alborada del Graciosa* or a *Moment Musical* of Schubert's) she creates choreography that not only stands up to it but makes you feel, as all great choreography should, that the music could be danced in no other way.

Perhaps Shearer is most famous for her use of her hands. In one of her most recent dances she sat in one place for the whole dance and just used her hands. She has the most brilliant and scintillating fast movement, the most perfect balance, of any modern dancer. Her dances are usually what is called "abstract," yet when she likes she can be an actress of profound pathetic power and a great comedienne. But above all, Shearer is a visionary. She is like some kind of seer, a Sybil indeed, who looks deep into the reality that lies beyond appearances and transmits to us a message that is at once

cryptic and disturbing, like the titles of her dances: *Seven Images of the Answer, Let the Heavens Open That the Earth May Shine, Shades Before Mars.*

Merce Cunningham

MERCE CUNNINGHAM was for some years a member of Martha Graham's company. He now has a fairly large and semi-permanent company of his own, who perform with a grave devotion his beautiful and strange dances. Cunningham is most furtunate in having such a loyal and talented company to lend his works a permanence that they indeed deserve but might not otherwise achieve, for they need to be part of a repertoire that is in fairly constant rehearsal. Cunningham did in fact once choreograph a work for Ballet Society, *The Seasons*, with a score by John Cage and decor by Noguchi. This even saw some performances in the early days of the New York City Ballet, and it is to the company's discredit that it has not remained in the repertoire. It is good news that Cunningham and Cage are now to collaborate on a new work for the San Francisco Ballet.

Cunningham's first solo dances doubtless were the product of a strong reaction from the declamatory style of dancing that he was for so long called upon to perform; and there is still in his dances a marked tendency to use "trivial" material (as is indicated by such titles as *Fragments* and *Minutiae*). But this is because he realises that there is often more significance in trivial-seeming things than is usually seen. Cunningham tries to show us this and leaves to others the grandiloquent passions and universal profundities that tend to look absurd when translated too explicitly into terms of dancing.

Another recurring element in his choreography is its illogicality, which helps to lend it a deceptively frivolous, almost Dadaist air. This inconsequence is present partly because many of his more recent dances have been composed according to his so-called chance method, whereby the sequence, direction, tempo, and so forth of the movements in a dance are determined literally by some such means as tossing a coin. This perhaps sounds pointlessly eccentric, but in fact has produced some interesting results, such as his *Collage*, to the *musique concrète* score *Symphonie pour un homme seul* by Pierre Schaeffer, in which such charming things occur as a moment when everyone balances on one foot and goes through the motions of filing his nails. There seems no reason why a choreographer should not make use of such adventitious aids to composition, even though not all the results may be worth performing, if they help him to discover new ways of making dances. Certainly Cunningham's latest, non-chance dances seem to have benefited from these experiments.

It is perhaps unnecessary to say that Cunningham is something of a controversial figure. When his 16 *Dances* were performed at the first American Dance season between, if I remember correctly, a work by Limon and another by Graham, there was a noisy demonstration of disapproval by one section of the audience, who presumably resented certain rather iconoclastic features of this work (such as a solo in which Cunningham made various grunting noises, much in the manner of certain Far-Eastern dances. Yet it is full of invention, gaiety, and charm, and was splendidly danced by the choreographer with Natanya Neumann, Joan Skinner, and Anneliese Widman.

Cunningham himself always dances splendidly. In fact, I think he is the finest male dancer the modern dance has produced. One has only to see his *Solo Suite in Space and Time* to know that his strength and quality are unrivalled. However unacceptable his experiments may be to some people, no one can claim that he is one of those who, lacking real imagination and talent, try to pull the wool over the audience's eyes.

It is not surprising that Cunningham has frequently and very successfully made dances to music of Satie. He has very much in common with that important but still neglected composer—especially of course the deceptive air of flippancy that conceals a real seriousness and seeking after truth. Of Cunningham's light-hearted dances, the best is the *Ragtime* from *Parade* (I wish he would do the whole ballet), and his most beautiful dance is the *Septet*, to the *Morceaux en forme de Poire*. This should be in the repertoire of a ballet company—it is indeed an almost Balanchinean work in certain sections, notably the dance for Cunningham and three girls, which recalls *Apollo*. It is a pity, too, that no ballet company has taken over Cunningham's version of Stravinsky's *Les Noces*, danced by an all-star company at a music festival two or three years ago, but never given elsewhere.

I hope I have not given the impression that Cunningham's work is exclusively cerebral. On the contrary, his dances always remain within human dimensions and are based on a sympathetic observation of and insight into people—especially in his comedy dances. Here, Cunningham most often appears as a pagan and irreverent figure, mocking pomposity and invoking laughter. He is capable too of tenderness, as in the beautiful duet *Amores* and the recent group dance *Springweather and People*. And he can beat the makers of popular ballets at their own game: his *Banjo* uses some of the same Gottschalk music as does *Cakewalk* and captures far more successfully the spirit of that ebullient high-strutting dance, while *Dime a Dance* (also a kind of chance-dance—a blindfold dancer draws out of a hat various props that indicate to the company which dances—10, I think, out of a possible 13 or so—will be given, and in what order) is as good fun as any other dancers-fooling-around-in-practice-dress ballet that you care to name.

MERCE CUNNINGHAM (one from right) with his group of dancers. Cunningham was for many years a member of Martha Graham's company but left her to form his own company. He is one of the most controversial figures in American Modern Dance.

Shirley Broughton

MERCE CUNNINGHAM is not the only choreographer who has thus broken away from the influence of Martha Graham and sought a kind of dancing less involved with the personality of its creator. Jean Erdman and Shirley Broughton have both made attempts in this direction. I will limit myself to discussing Broughton's work because I have a closer personal acquaintance with it (I have in fact seen Erdman's only in rehearsal) and because it represents a more extreme reaction.

One of Broughton's more important ideas, I think, is that the modern dance is severely limited by the absence of a codified technique —it is like a language that has a vocabulary but no grammar, so to speak. It is her contention that it is possible and indeed necessary, to perform the various movements that modern dancers have evolved—the contractions and releases, and so forth—with no reference to the emotional impulses that originally prompted their discovery. This idea certainly has important implications in the *teaching* of modern dancing: Broughton's choreography is in a sense a logical extension of it. For this reason, perhaps, her dances cannot be entirely acquitted of the charge of having a certain sameness and of being divorced from emotion almost to the point of inflexibility.

At its best, however, there is a tremendous excitement in her work. Her *Quartet* especially is in both sense of the word a classic dance. It is in a Stravinskyan sense a "white" dance—the word was used by Balanchine, but is not less appropriate, therefore, since there is also something very Balanchinean in *Quartet*. Broughton's movement has, in its constant swooping, pouncing, thrusting, swerving, a very definite, almost audible, pulse—just as well in the case of *Quartet* since its music (by Morton Feldman) is of the tinkle . . . boinggg school of modern American music. This is a case where the music does the dance a distinct disservice. *Quartet* established Broughton's style—essentially American in its vigorous and forthright athleticism, yet classic in its clarity

(*continued on page 34*)

curtain up!

FESTIVAL STARS IN BORDEAUX: Before their triumphant season in Munich, Festival Ballet appeared at the Bordeaux Festival where Etudes *in particular had a tremendous success. Here are Fleming Flindt, Anita Landa, Anton Dolin, Marilyn Burr and John Gilpin outside the theatre.*
Before they open their Festival Hall season the company flew to Israel, where the season was sold out before arrival, and took in the Holland Festival on the way home.
Photo: Lido

Saved from disaster

ANYTHING can happen when French companies dance in London—and usually does! It is almost taken for granted by those of us who have seen and enjoyed these companies since the war that the dancers scheduled to appear will not be the same throughout the season.

Catastrophe nearly overtook Roland Petit's recent season at the Palace Theatre during the second week. First Violette Verdy, who starred in two of the four ballets shown, had to withdraw because of an injured leg. She gave what was to have been her last performance on the Thursday and her roles were allocated to other members of the company.

The following night Renée Jeanmaire suddenly became ill and it was quite impossible for her to appear in the title role of *Carmen*. Verdy happened to call at the theatre and, despite her injury, agreed to go on as Carmen in place of Jeanmaire. Verdy was again announced for the 5.30 performance on the Saturday, but this time her doctor and her mother forbade her to dance as otherwise she might have done herself irreparable harm. For once, therefore, *Carmen* had to be omitted from the programme. By the 8.30 performance Colette Marchand, newly arrived in London to see her husband, had reached the theatre and was able to take over the role.

A word of praise must go to the box-office staff of the Palace Theatre. When refunding money or giving tickets for other performances to the disappointed audience of the curtailed programme, they remained polite and good-tempered despite the bad behaviour of a small minority of the patrons.

Transatlantic critics

A CONCLAVE of critics assembled in Copenhagen for the annual festival (to be reported in full in our next issue). This year the occasion had a transatlantic accent with both of America's leading critics in Europe together for the first time—John Martin of the *New York Times* and Walter Terry of the *New York Herald Tribune*. "We quite often don't agree, but we get along fine together," declared Terry. But for safety's sake the two critics were placed in hotels at diametrically opposite ends of the town. However, the precaution was not necessary as both were seen night after night at performances and parties in deep and friendly discussion. Others from the States included P. W. Manchester of *Dance News* (is she British or American?) and Doris Herring of *Dance Magazine*.

Both Terry and Herring were in Europe for the first time and, judging by the way they were enjoying themselves, I would say that it could easily be the first of many times. Martin has often been to Europe, and he and his wife more or less dropped in on their way to Russia to get a look at the Bolshoi Ballet.

The English dance critics included Joan Lawson and the Editor and Assistant Editor of DANCE AND DANCERS.

Correction needed

WHENEVER I go to Covent Garden I see more members of the direction and the company watching the Wells performances than must be the case with any other company. Why is it then that not one of them appears to have corrected a soloist who at every performance I have seen of *Les Patineurs* this season has executed a wrong arm movement which must have been obvious to even those seeing the ballet for the first time?

The same applies to another soloist in the Spanish *pas de quatre* in the third act of *Le Lac des Cygnes*—her hands are always pointing in the opposite direction to those of her sister, and held in a most un-Spanish position. It is difficult to know in this case which dancer is right, but I put my money on the one who has danced in the ballet the longest time.

Danish Coppelia for England

BALLETS come and go, but *Coppelia* apparently goes on for ever. Recently Ballet Rambert added the last act of this ballet to their repertoire; it is the first phase of a plan to restore the whole work. The designs are those which Douboujinsky originally made for the Lithuanian Ballet before the war.

A quite different version will be the *Coppelia* put on by London's Festival Ballet during their next season at the Royal Festival Hall. This is the Danish version which has been given in Copenhagen since the beginning of this century, and which was first seen in England when the Royal Danish Ballet came to Covent Garden three years ago. Harald Lander will revive this delightful character ballet for the English company.

André Levasseur will design *Coppelia*, thus making it the fourth work that this talented young Frenchman has designed for British companies since the beginning of the year, the others being *La Péri* and *Birthday Offering* for Sadler's Wells and *Homage to a Princess* for Festival Ballet.

Wells duo on tour

MARGOT FONTEYN was the first of the Wells ballerinas to embark on concert tours of the British provinces. Her group, which included Robert Helpmann and a number of students from the Sadler's Wells School, was affectionately nicknamed the "Fonteyn Follies." Since then several groups have made sorties from Bow Street—Elvin toured the Welsh mining areas, Nerina and Rassine twice toured South Africa. This time the two latter will not go so far when they make a tour of the English provinces during the whole of July. They are billed as "Ballet Highlights," a title once used by Leonide Massine when he toured a company in America some years ago.

The two Wells dancers will appear in *soli* and *pas de deux* from *Swan Lake*, *Les Sylphides*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Coppelia* and *Don Quixote*. Nerina will dance the *Dying Swan*, according to the Press blurb, as "a tribute to the great Anna Pavlova"; Rassine will appear as Vestris in a solo created for him by Dame Ninette de Valois.

New role for music critic

WE always knew that Dame Ninette de Valois held a special corner in her heart for music critics, but until I read that lush and generally admirable book—*Gala Performance*—I was unaware that one of the most distinguished of them, Ernest Newman, created a role in Ashton's *A Wedding Bouquet*. It might, of course, be a misprint for Claude Newman.

A check-list in *Gala Performance* is prefaced by a little note: "Although every effort has been made to ensure accuracy and completeness,

NEXT MONTH

LOOK FOR

the American Ballet Theatre picture on the yellow cover of the August DANCE AND DANCERS.

Also in this number will be FESTIVAL IN DENMARK, by PETER WILLIAMS. As well as the story of the Royal Danish Ballet Festival there will be pictures and opinions of the revival of Bournonville's *Far from Denmark* and an appreciation of the great Danish mime, Gerda Karstens, who has retired from the stage.

FESTIVAL IN SWEDEN, by CLIVE BARNES, which includes pictures and opinion of the revival of three Massine ballets—*The Rite of Spring*, *The Three-Cornered Hat* and *Gaîté Parisienne*.

TWO FROM MACMILLAN—pictures and opinion of the two creations for the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet—*Somnambulism* and *Solitaire*, as well as a review of the season at Sadler's Wells and an assessment of the revised version of Rodrigues' *Saudades*.

Also in this number will be reviews of the HUNGARIAN STATE DANCE COMPANY and the FESTIVAL IN HOLLAND, together with all the usual features and many new topical ones.

On sale July 20

During the next few months, the Editor and the Assistant Editor hope to visit festivals and companies in the following countries—Holland, Spain, Italy and France. They will report on the activities and personalities in those countries.

there are bound to be both errors and omissions in the lists. For these the editors apologise, and would be most grateful to anyone who can point them out." Much as we should like to earn the gratitude of the book's distinguished trio of editors, one shrinks before the Herculean task that would be involved in pointing out the vast number of mistakes these lists contain.

She's here, she's there

IT has often been said that Dame Ninette de Valois does not enjoy robust health. If this is really the case it is incredible what she does for Sadler's Wells, directing two companies and flying all over the world in their interest. In a previous number of DANCE AND DANCERS we announced her forthcoming lecture tour of America in the autumn, the proceeds of which are going to help the Sadler's Wells School. This tour is possibly going to be made even more strenuous by the fact that she will undoubtedly be back in London by the time the Bolshoi Ballet appears at Covent Garden.

Now, believe it or not, Dame Ninette has added another achievement to her over-full schedule of activities. In the middle of May she flew to Copenhagen to cast a new production of the full-length *The Sleeping Beauty* which the Royal Danish Ballet are to give in the new year. True, she will not be in Denmark for all the rehearsals as Peggy Van Praagh is to supervise these, but she will be in Copenhagen to put the final touches.

Ghosting the classics

THE late lamented magazine *Ballet* once investigated a claim that the shade of Taglioni had spoken at a spiritualist seance. *Ballet* was unable to confirm the story, in spite of a number of visits made to two ladies called the Misses Taglioni. The Sadler's Wells Ballet have been far more successful in making contact with the other world. In their twenty-fifth anniversary souvenir programme, Jean Coralli, Lev Ivanov, Jules Perrot and Marius Petipa are listed among the choreographers who have worked with the company. This is indeed a remarkable example of psychic contact, but it would seem, from the resulting productions of the departed choreographer's ballets, that on some days at least the lines of communication must have been a little indistinct.

Mae Froham dies

TO many people in England, the name Mae Frohman does not mean anything. But it was possibly as much to her as anyone else that we owe the visits of the Sadler's Wells Ballet to America. What part she played in the negotiations we shall probably never know, but it is certain that it must have been considerable, as she was Sol Hurok's closest adviser for over 25 years. He seldom, if ever, engaged an artist without consulting her. Known as the Executive Secretary of Hurok Attractions, her importance to ballet was much more than that title implies. On April 23 she died at the age of 50—a great loss to the art of ballet and to the very many dancers who were her close friends.

happy birthday to...

		July
Alexander Bennett	Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet	27
David Blair	Sadler's Wells Ballet	27
Anton Dolin	Festival Ballet	27
Jacques d'Amboise	New York City Ballet	28
Una Russell	New York City Ballet	29
Andrea Karlsen	De Cuevas Grand Ballet	30
		August
Beverly Irvings	Royal Winnipeg Ballet	1
Eric Kristen	Ballet Theatre	3
Jacqueline Ivings	Canadian National Ballet	4
Gordon Wales	Royal Winnipeg Ballet	4
Howard Meadows	Canadian National Ballet	5
Leslie Edwards	Sadler's Wells Ballet	7
Richard Adama	Dancing in Vienna	8
Jack Carter	Choreographer in Holland	8
Dorothy Walker	Late International Ballet	9
Vladimir Arapoff	De Cuevas Grand Ballet	10
Georges Golovine	De Cuevas Grand Ballet	10
Sigurd Leeder	Teaching in London	14
John Cranko	Sadler's Wells Organisation	15
Anne Rowse	Festival Ballet	15
Peggy Rae Norman	Royal Winnipeg Ballet	16
Michael Lland	Ballet Theatre	17
Rochelle Balzer	Ballet Theatre	18

BALLETS 1956: *Young stars of the new group which opens at the Lyons Festival in June under the artistic direction of Iréne Lidova and Milorad Miskovitch. Back row (l. to r.): Tessa Beaumont, Miskovitch and Ethéry Pagava. On the floor: Milko Sparemblek, Claire Sombert and Vassili Sulich. English choreographer Walter Gore is to create a ballet for the company to Glazunov music. Photo: Lido Photo: Jeffrey Kovel*

Dancer you will know

Photo: Jeffrey Kovel

RONALD EMBLEN

BORN in Port Said, coming to England with his family in 1938. *Started to dance at the Sadler's Wells School, where his first teachers were Vera Volkova and Claude Newman. Later he studied under Anna Northcote. He made his debut while still a Wells student, appearing with the company as the American child in* La Boutique Fantasque. *In* 1951 *he joined International Ballet, remaining with that company for two years. After a brief spell with the Walter Gore Ballet, in* 1954 *he joined Festival Ballet, in Barcelona during a Spanish tour.*

Principal creations: Buffoon in La Esmeralda; *Rhumba movement in* Homage to a Princess.

Principal roles: (for International Ballet) Bluebird Pas de Deux *in* The Sleeping Beauty; Pas de Trois *and Spanish Dqnce in* Swan Lake; *(for Walter Gore Ballet)* in Mr. Punch; Light Fantastic; *(for Festival Ballet)* Trepak *and* Danse Chinois *in* The Nutcracker; *Blue Boy in* Symphony for Fun; *March Hare and Dragonfly in* Alice in Wonderland.

THE male dancers in Festival Ballet are anything but anaemic. As a group they have a vigorous approach, sometimes better suited to character than classical ballet, but on the whole exhilaratingly virile. Typical of these dancers is Ronald Emblen.

An almost aggressively extrovert personality, he rarely has any difficulty in making his presence felt in the *corps*. His Trepak in *The Nutcracker* (dancing with Kerr and Kovel) and his Buffoon in *Esmeralda* (dancing with Kovel) have both been outstanding, and when he took over Kovel's role of the leading Dragonfly in *Alice in Wonderland* he showed a neat classical technique.

It is however in the two Charnley American-style ballets that he has been seen to best advantage. In both *Symphony for Fun* and *Homage to a Princess* his dancing and personality have found their fullest outlet. Here he seems completely at home, and one can well imagine him excelling in the gum-chewing classicism of Jerome Robbins's *Interplay* and *Fancy Free*.

Two Ballets to Bach

NEW RECORDS
Reviewed by DAVID HUNT

Bach: Orchestral Suites—No. 1 in C; No. 2 in B Minor (DTL93073); No. 3 in D; No. 4 in D (DTL93074). Munich Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra (Kurt Redel). Ducretet Thomson DTL93073-4. 2 12in. 79*s.* 3*d.*

"THE apotheosis of the dance"—Wagner's famous description of the Beethoven Seventh Symphony—could be applied more fittingly to Bach's magnificent Orchestral Suites.

All four suites begin with the type of movement known as a French Overture in which a slow introduction is followed by a fugal *allegro*, with a return to the grave mood of the opening. Then comes a wonderful series of dance movements, often arranged in pairs, extolling the beauties of the *Courante*, *Gavotte*, *Forlane*, *Minuet*, *Bourrée*, *Passepied*, *Rondeau*, *Sarabande*, *Polonaise* and *Gigue*. The Second and Fourth Suites end with delightful descriptive pieces entitled *Badinerie* (banter) and *Réjouissance* (rejoicing), while the Third Suite contains the celebrated *Air*, for strings alone.

The Second Suite, scored for strings and the silvery tones of a solo flute, supplied the noble accompaniment for Fokine's ballet *Les Eléments*, a sumptuously dressed essay in the Baroque manner, which the great Russian choreographer created in 1937 for René Blum's Ballets de Monte Carlo.

The four suites are given impeccably stylish performance on these records, played with buoyant rhythm, discipline and polish, and with imaginative realisation of the harpsichord continuo adding to the delight. The recording is clear and well balanced; some wiriness in the treble can be easily eliminated with tone controls.

Bach in the garret

Bach: Passacaglia and Fugue in C Minor; Toccata and Fugue in D Minor. *Komm', susser Tod.* Leopold Stokowski and his Symphony Orchestra. HMV BLP1074. 10 in. 29*s.* 6½*d.*

THE use of Bach's great Passacaglia and Fugue for Petit's *Le Jeune Homme et la Mort* was an inspired piece of bad taste that resulted in an exciting theatrical *tour de force*. The ballet, with its contemporary theme and setting, also gave proof, if proof were needed, of the timeless modernity of Bach's genius; but anyone who thought that the powerful impact the ballet made was due to its fragmentary choreography could have had scant idea of the important part played by music in determining the emotional and dramatic temperature in ballet.

Although, to be exact, *Le Jeune Homme et la Mort* was not danced to Stokowski's orchestration, but to Respighi's, this record provides a useful souvenir of the ballet. Provided one is prepared to forego the majesty of Bach's original organ scoring, Stokowski's transcription can be enjoyed on its own colourful terms. Much more open to question is the exaggerated, heavily romantic style of the performance; while the rather woolly recording does not measure up to today's high standard.

The same remarks apply to the treatment meted out to the D Minor Toccata and Fugue (the one used by Disney in *Fantasia*), and to the sacred song *Komm', susser Tod.*

Tudor's masterpiece

Dark Elegies (Mahler: *Kindertotenlieder*), Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (baritone), Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra (Rudolf Kempe). HMV BLP1081. 10 in. 29*s.* 6½*d.*

MAHLER'S song-cycle *Kindertotenlieder* (*Songs on the Deaths of Children*) consists of settings of five poems by the German scholar and lyric poet Friedrich Rückert, written after the tragic death of his own child.

The sombre work is hardly the kind of music normally considered suitable for ballet, yet with insight amounting to genius, Anthony Tudor in his *Dark Elegies* gave profoundly moving visual expression to Mahler's score in terms of a ritualistic, restrained nobility of movement. It is my considered opinion that in its composite effect Tudor's ballet is a greater work of art than are the songs when heard in isolation; although I should not expect Mahler enthusiasts who had never seen the work to take this statement seriously.

Kindertotenlieder can be sung either by a contralto or, as in the ballet, by a baritone. In an earlier Columbia recording Kathleen Ferrier transcended the note of hysteria in the songs, tempering a mother's grief with a soothing balm of compassionate tenderness. Unlike Ferrier, and also Tudor for that matter, Fischer-Dieskau has not looked deeper than the words and his beautiful singing is instinct with dramatic inflections of resentment and anger, so that here the resignation of the ending is made to sound unconvincing. The sensitively played orchestral part, however, has been far more vividly reproduced than was the case on the earlier recording and this is an important consideration in deciding between the two versions.

A new Boutique

La Boutique Fantasque (Rossini arr. Respighi). RIAS Symphony Orchestra, Berlin (Ferenc Fricsay). Deutsche Grammophon DG17054. 10 in. 29*s.* 6½*d.*

APART from several tiny cuts, most notably in the Snob and Melon Vendor's dance and in the *Galop*, this new 10-inch recording of *La Boutique Fantasque* gives as much of the music as the famous Decca 12-inch version, conducted by Ernest Ansermet. As on the Decca the only piece omitted altogether is the mime scene that leads into the *Can-Can*.

The playing of the German orchestra is polished and the recording has been well managed; but the conductor takes a very serious view indeed of the light-hearted score, missing the verve and effervescent gaiety of such things as the *Tarantella*, the *Mazurka*, and the *Can-Can* to a quite surprising degree. The general result is a thoroughly respectable, rather tame performance that is more evocative of the kind of shop-soiled *Boutique* one is apt to meet with at Covent Garden than of the enchanting ballet the work was in its heyday, and of which Ansermet's recording, on the other hand, gives reassuring if nostalgic reminder.

Diverting Flamenco

Ay! Flamenco. Pedro de Linares (Flamenco singer), Pepe de Almeria (guitar). Felsted PDL85005. 12in. 39*s.* 7½*d.*

AN enjoyable Flamenco record that plumbs no tragic depths, with most of the material sounding carefully prepared rather than spontaneously elaborated. Of the 10 numbers, four are guitar solos—*Tanguillo*, *Farruca*, *Alegria* and *Soleares*. These are played by Pepe de Almeria with the same magical mastery of nostalgic nuance that helped to make his recording of Flamenco songs with Manolo Leiva on TWV91051 such a richly rewarding experience.

In the others, Pedro de Linares, although possessing an admirable voice and technique, pitches his performance at too low a key of intensity to convey any credible impression of rapt exaltation. But very diverting to listen to, all the same.

DECOR FOR THE ELEMENTS: The setting (left) by Dmitri Bouchenne for Fokine's ballet to Bach music, Les Eléments, *first presented by the René Blum Company at the Coliseum Theatre, London, in 1937. A performance photograph (below) by Houston Rogers of another ballet based on the elements, Ashton's* Homage to the Queen, *for Sadler's Wells Ballet. Messel's setting made similar use of stylised Baroque.*

From Ballet to a Musical

DANCER IN MUSICALS
by HARRY STONE

ALTHOUGH Herida May has had wide experience in ballet, *Summer Song*, now at the Princes Theatre, is the first musical in which she has appeared. The ebullience and finish of her performance in the principal dancing role of this colourful entertainment based on Dvorák's music shows that her ballet career has stood her in good stead.

After studying with a number of teachers, including Sergueef, Preobrajenska, Egorova and Volkova, Herida May joined the International Ballet. She left to become a soloist with De Basil's Ballet Russe, dancing such roles as Action in Massine's *Les Présages* and Guile in Fokine's *Paganini*.

Returning to International, she danced most of the principal ballerina parts, including the Swan Queen, Princess Aurora, the Glove Seller in *Gaité Parisienne*, and the Queen of the Wilis. After this, she joined the Ballet Comique.

For the leading dancing role in *Summer Song*, choreographer Pauline Grant needed a brilliant technician to lend glitter to the saloon scene. As well as providing this, Herida May disproved the view producers are inclined to hold that dancers who come to musicals direct from ballet companies will have only a perfect technique and little in the way of personality. May found that the ballet character roles she had danced, such as Mrs. X in *Shadows of the Past* and the Gypsy in Algeranov's *For Love or Money*, helped her to adapt her approach to the unaccustomed medium to a far greater extent than she had expected.

Dancing in a successful West End musical does not entail the long daily rehearsals that one takes for granted in a ballet company, with its constant changes of repertory. Herida May is taking advantage of this extra free time by devoting all her spare energy to her hobbies of dress designing and modelling. Her partner in *Summer Song* is William Barrett, who was a member of the Sadler's Wells Ballet for four years.

HERIDA MAY *Photo: Adrian Flowers*

Dance and Dancers . . . . AT HOME

SADLER'S WELLS BALLET

Helpman as birthday Rake

THERE was a mixture of electricity and nostalgia in the foyers of Covent Garden even before the curtain went up on the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary programme on May 5. "Look, there's Mary Honer," murmured a faithful fan excitedly, "and here comes Ursula Moreton. I wish she was dancing tonight because when she appeared at the twenty-first birthday she was marvellous in the brothel." She meant, presumably, the Orgy Scene from de Valois *The Rake's Progress*. I too found myself wishing that more of the original members of the company had been dancing in this work which opened the programme of this most recent, and most memorable, of Covent Garden gala nights.

I do not think that de Valois' choreographic evocation of Hogarth's decline and fall series is really an opening ballet. Nor do I feel that the *Rake*, fine dramatic work that it is, has a place at all in an evening of this kind. Presumably the reason for including it was to give Helpmann an important role.

We have in the past few years been lucky enough to see Walter Gore re-creating this role which he originally created, so it is possible to compare these two fine British artists.

I am certain that in any dramatic work, whether it be a play, opera or ballet, it is essential to feel some kind of sympathy for every character whether he be hero or villian; heaven alone knows which of these two the Rake is supposed to be. With Gore, one always had a sneaking sympathetic regard for the rascal and this made his final disintegration all the more tragic. I found it impossible to have any sympathy at all for Helpmann's Rake—a thoroughly unlikeable and repellent character who deserves all he gets, and no tears shed.

In the Orgy Scene, Helpmann was at his best. As he enters this scene of dissipation, he staggers against the door-post, his poached-egg eyes not quite grasping his surroundings. This kind of entrance is a master-stroke of theatre because in a few seconds he has conveyed to the audience his whole mental and physical decline since the previous scene. Later in this scene he brings off another comic incident: espying an attractive woman from across the room, he tries to get to her; realising that he is too drunk to make the journey, he suddenly pulls himself together and walks proudly for a few steps, then falls with a mighty crash at her feet.

In the final scene in the mad-house Helpmann was horrifying; his emaciated body looked wracked with disease and already it seemed as though the flesh was receding and the form of the skull appearing. His eyes were but hollow sockets and his mouth open in a death-croak. But as I have said, it was impossible to feel pity for him.

Alexis Rassine gave a splendid period cameo as the Rake's Friend and it was a pleasure to see Joy Newton again as the sleazy Ballad Singer. Ray Powell as the Man with the Rope was as macabre as one could wish for. Otherwise the rest of the cast were disapointing. Julia Farron lacked poignancy as the Betrayed Girl and Brian Shaw seemed rather uncertain as the Dancing Master. The Gambling Scene, possibly the best dramatic choreography in the whole work, was not nearly as good as when given by the Theatre Ballet.

A stellar Tango

FREDERICK ASHTON'S *Birthday Offering*, created specially for the occasion, formed the centre-piece of the programme and is reviewed in full elsewhere in this issue. The evening ended with a rollicking performance of Ashton's *Façade*, with the re-instatement of *Nocturne Peruvienne* for Helpmann. As an ultra-spiv, Helpmann rolled his eyes at the gallery and brought the house down, his eloquent artistry projecting in a manner that has not been seen in the Opera House since he officially retired from the ballet scene. Helpmann has but to wiggle a hip or waggle a finger to have everyone tied up in stitches. Whether this was actually very fair when Peter Clegg, Anne Howard and Shirley Grahame were trying to dance the *Scottish Rhapsody* is another matter.

Later Merle Park made an innocent and charming Milkmaid in the *Yodelling Song* but the surprise of the evening came with Rosemary Lindsay in the Polka. This dance, originally created by Markova, has not since been given with anything like Markova's understanding. Now Lindsay, giving a splendidly naughty and piquant performance, has stepped back into the petticoat so charmingly discarded by Markova.

Margot Fonteyn became the Debutante to Helpmann's Dago in the final Tango, and what a pleasure it was to see these two stars together again! Disregarding the fact that it was a sentimental occasion, both danced this witty burlesque of *Thé Dansant* behaviour in a way that I feel no other of the world's ballet stars could achieve. I shall always regret that a ballerina's progress to *assoluta*-dom absolves her from appearing regularly in roles such as this. Looking very pretty, Fonteyn entered into it all as if it were the first time she had ever been taught the tango by a gigolo—her back wiggled at his touch and the dead-pan surprise on her face as she was turned upside down will always be among my most treasured memories of Fonteyn. Helpmann was every inch the kind of person daughters are forbidden to go out with. The solemnity of the evening's beginning was completely dissipated in this hilarity.

P.W.

Lane as Swanilda

ALTHOUGH Maryon Lane's interpretation of Swanilda in *Coppelia* is well known from her appearances in the Theatre Ballet production, her first appearance in the role at Covent Garden on the afternoon of May 19, a performance that also marked her first appearance in any full-length role at the Opera House, was awaited with the liveliest interest. During her stay with the Theatre Ballet, Lane established a considerable public following, the loyalty of which can be judged by the warmth of the welcome which greeted her first Bow Street Swanilda.

None of her admirers has cause for disappointment, it was, by any standards, a distinguished first performance which proved a distinct advance on her earlier charming portrayal. At this performance she was a shade too forceful, so that her dancing did not look as easy as it might. But this is a

DESIGN FOR RODRIGUES' BALLET: The new creation to be given by the Sadler's Wells Ballet at this year's Edinburgh Festival will be The Miraculous Mandarin, *which has a story and music by Béla Bartók. The choreography is by Alfred Rodrigues and the designs are by Wakhevitch, whose setting is seen in the picture above.*

Rodrigues is not the first British choreographer to make a ballet to this music as Alan Carter produced his version in Munich two years ago. *Photo: Derek Allen*

small fault easily rectified. Her dancing as a whole, with its clean line and crisp attack, was splendid and her personality filled the Opera House. Her credible interpretation of the part was intelligent and resourceful, and she showed quite a few touches of originality in her mime scenes.

She was at her weakest in the last-act *pas de deux*, and in this she was not perhaps given a great deal of help by her partner, Alexander Grant. Nor was Grant's dancing beyond reproach, being a trifle untidy and slap-dash. In the things Grant does best he has few equals in Western ballet, unfortunately one would not say that Frantz is one of the things he does best.

Shirley Graham gave a vivacious and assured first performance as Aurora, while Brenda Taylor's excellent Prayer variation nearly justified its choreography. In the *finale* her lovely natural jump was outstanding, and one wishes all our girls had the same easy spring.

Jackson's improved Odette

ALL through this remarkable season, which has surely witnessed more good dancing than Sadler's Wells have ever before presented, the improvement of Rowena Jackson was noticeable. But the full extent of that improvement did not become apparent until her Odette-Odile in *Swan Lake* on May 21.

Previously she was in temperament more an Odette than an Odile, although the fact that her unusually strong technique comfortably encompassed the Black Swan's technical demands persuaded some people to the contrary. Now her performance is much more evenly balanced. Her second-act Odette was more entranced than enchanted, but her last act showed genuine dramatic sensibility and understanding.

Her Odile was attractive (perhaps a little too attractive) and the variation was exquisitely well-danced, with complete ease and perfect timing. Her back is still not as expressive as some, and her hands are occasionally appendages rather than extensions of her arms, but she has developed into an Odette-Odile I would personally not have thought possible from her first performances. If this is her normal standard one would welcome her in a few more of the full-length ballerina roles in the repertory.

Jackson was helpfully partnered by Somes, who was, however, dancing perhaps a little below his best form. The *Pas de Trois* was attractively danced, with a youthful stridency, by Shirley Graham, Merle Park and Peter Clegg, who all showed a substantial advance on their previous showing in this dance.

Clive Barnes

BALLET RAMBERT

Season in the suburbs

ALTHOUGH it seems that Londoners are to be deprived of the opportunity to see the Ballet Rambert in central London this summer, it was possible for the hardier of them to travel out to Harrow during May and see the company at the Harrow Coliseum. Since it last played at this theatre at the end of last year, a number of changes have been made in its personnel, the most important being the substitution of David Poole for the previous principal male dancer, Alexander Bennett, and the return of Mary Munro.

One of the main interests of the week's performances was the new production of *Coppelia*, Act 3, which is described below, but the general repertory also had much to offer, and the company was dancing well.

To get the worst over with first, the production of *Swan Lake*, shortened since we last saw it, is not now good. Neither Patricia Dyer nor Noreen Sopwith are particularly convincing as Odette, although the more experienced Sopwith dances it better. Both Poole and Ronald Yerrell partner well as Siegfried, and have a nice air of melancholy romanticism about them, but hardly justify a production that needs considerable overhaul. It is most regrettable that English audiences and, for the complaint is highly contagious, English theatre managements, insist on these classical excerpts, which simple cannot show a company like the Rambert at its best.

Too youthful floozies

The revival of Tudor's *The Judgment of Paris* has obviously been prompted by the present vogue for the music, which has been taken from Brecht-Weill's *The Threepenny Opera*. Even before the curtain rose the audience were humming to themselves happily —it was just like performances of *Prince Igor* immediately after the production of *Kismet*.

Unfortunately the bitter mood of Tudor's tragi-comedy, which one either finds disturbingly memorable or dismisses as trivial, seems to have evaporated. The three clip-joint floozies (Mary Munro, Gillian Martlew and Valerie Marsh) are now far too young and attractive for the foot-weary routines with which they ply their trade. Even David Poole, in a well-considered sketch as the shifty Waiter who fleeces the establishment's solitary client, had a trace of whimiscal benignity about him that was out of key with what should surely be a vicious, if amusing, ballet.

Gore, grave and gay

The two Gore ballets shown during the week were both in excellent shape. It is a peculiar quality of Gore's *Winter Night* that it seems to take on a fresh but valid emotional colouring from each of its successive casts. A strange ballet in many ways, it is dramatic without being narrative in that it describes an emotional situation (the eternal triangle) without developing a story. Set to Rachmaninov's Second Piano Concerto, its choreographic style has some affinities with Massine's symphonic manner, but instead of symbolism Gore fills the ballet with seething passion.

David Poole and Ann Horn, the present interpreters of the roles created in Australia by Gore and Gilmour, are rather more restrained than any of their predecessors. Horn, greatly improved in this as in everything else since I last saw her, manages to convey tumultuous feeling bubbling beneath the surface and somethimes breaking through in an almost neurotic outburst. If Fay Compton were a dancer, this is the kind of performance I would expect her to give. Poole is also exceptionally good as the man whose past is not quite wiped out by his new love, and still has an affection, like an extinct volcano, for his previous mistress. Noreen Sopwith as the dewy young love could perhaps do with a tinge of the animal sensuality Paula Hinton brought to the role, but she and the rest of the company supported the principals well.

Simple Symphony, Gore's picture of love in its less tortured transports, was given a performance as bright, gay and inconsequential as its choreography. Norman Dixon, in Gore's old part, has a perfect command of the ballet's eccentricities, and always manages to present a well-rounded personality on the stage. The other leading roles were cheerfully danced by Ann Horn, Mary Munro and John Chesworth.

New name for Macmillan ballet

Kenneth Macmillan's *Laiderette* has obtained a new name, *Mask and Face*, which makes it sound like a Hollywood spy thriller. Yet the ballet retains its pungent atmosphere, and confirms its importance as one of Macmillan's most impressive works. Patricia Dyer has now got to terms with the characterisation of Laiderette, although she still perhaps lacks some of the agony and pathos given it by

Maryon Lane and Patricia Ashworth. Poole is dancing the role of the Host, which he actually created when the ballet was originally produced by the Sadler's Wells Choreographic group. His mature personality and natural understanding of the choreographer's intentions adds balance to the ballet. Unlike Yerrell, who also dances the part for Rambert, he makes the Host remarkably sympathetic, an interpretation that adds a worldly irony to his rejection of Laiderette when he finds her to be not the beauty he first imagined.

Advantageous comparison

With *Façade*, now back in the repertory after a short absence, the Rambert challenges immediate comparison with the Sadler's Wells organisation, and the comparison is not entirely to the small company's disadvantage. Certainly John Armstrong's original decor and costumes, which have not been used by the Wells since 1940, are definitely preferable to the second version he produced. and some of the satire in the Rambert production, notably the *Valse*, is more effectively barbed.

David Poole's Dago, more a down-at-heel waiter than a Ritz Bar gigolo or a *palais de danse* spiv, is good without being one of the best, but Ann Horn's Debutante, of a few years back one suspects, is hilarious. Patricia Ashworth made a well-directed shot at the Polka, and Dixon and Chesworth were as bored by the *Popular Song* as anyone could wish.

COPPELIA, ACT 3

First produced by the Ballet Rambert at the Arts Theatre, Cambridge, on May 7, 1956.

Choreography, Ivanov after Saint-Léon; Music, Delibes; Scenery and Costumes, M. V. Doboujinsky.

Cast

The Mayor ..	RONALD YERRELL
Swanilda ..	NOREEN SOPWITH
Franz	.. NORMAN DIXON
Dr. Coppelius ..	.. DAVID POOLE
Dawn	GILLIAN MARTLEW
Prayer	.. .. ANN HORN
Bethrothal Dance	PATRICIA ASWORTH and JOHN CHESWORTH

IT will soon be a distinguishing trait of a British ballet company that it includes *Coppelia* in its repertory. Somewhere in our island there must be a group of people whose sole delight consists in watching this dear old ballet, and no other inducements will bring them to the box-office. This fast expanding and obviously highly-organised group are dictating their wishes upon the rest of the community—soon no company that fails to give *Coppelia* twice nightly will be allowed to survive.

The Ballet Rambert intend to produce the full-length ballet in time; this third act represents an interim instalment, the ballet being produced sectionally as was their famous *Giselle*. Although the last act, which is merely a *divertissement*, is probably the obvious choice to be produced as a separate repertory item, it is also the least significant as regards production, so this must be regarded very much as an interim report.

The choreography of the third act appears to be based largely on that produced, and partly choreographed by Sergueeff, first for Sadler's Wells and later for International Ballet. Some of the numbers have been changed, and the Work Dance has been changed into a *Pas de Six* for four girls and two boys. The male variation is at present omitted, but Frantz's *coda*, which was, I believe introduced into the Sadler's Wells version by Frederic Franklin (I forget where *he* got it from), is included.

A cheerful fantasy

Doboujinsky's designs (this last act setting is obviously and sensibly intended to serve also as the first act decor when the time comes, thus following current practice) were based on those he designed for the Lithuanian Ballet, which was seen in London at the old Alhambra Theatre in 1935. Gay, cheerful and inventive, they see the ballet in terms of Russian fantasy. In the present setting there is some disparity in treatment between the wings and the backcloth. It may be objected that *Coppelia* is a realistic, romantic ballet (its nearest relation in the current repertory is *Giselle* and the Bournonville ballets) but as no other English company wishes to see it in those terms, it may well be that the same society that insists on *Coppelia* being produced also insists on it being realised in a non-realistic manner. The costumes, a froth of polka-dot and candy-stripe, are engaging, but some of the head-dresses, particularly one for Prayer that looked as though it came out of a Christmas cracker, are not very pretty.

The dancing of the production at Harrow was extremely lively, and enabled the ballet to go with a swing. All the principals did well, the adagio for Sopwith and Dixon being especially well-performed. The new *pas de six* however is choreographically no more distinguished than the boring Work Dance it replaces, and this could undoubtedly be improved.

One hopes that when the company tackle the first two acts, which are full of tricky production points, Madame Rambert will bring the same imagination to her reconstruction as she lavished on her *Giselle*.

C.A.B.

NEW SETTING FOR COPPELIA: *The setting by Doboujinsky for the new Rambert* Coppelia. *At the moment only the last act is given but when the complete ballet is finally produced, this setting will also be used for the first act.* *Photo: John Chesworth*

PAS DE DEUX: *Norman Dixon as Frantz and Noreen Sopwith as Swanilda in the* pas de deux *from the Rambert* Coppelia. *Photo: John Chesworth*

WEST COUNTRY BALLET

First London season

FOR its second venture in ballet management the London Ballet Circle chose to present the West Country Ballet at the Rudolf Steiner Theatre for two performances on May 17 and 18.

When the West Country Ballet first appeared, dancing in last year's Edinburgh Festival, we applauded its indifference to box-office taste and its evident determination to escape from the rut of the dingy *ballet blanc* that trips up most small ballet ventures. The group of dancers was small but well selected, and what the company lacked in taste it made up for with a certain originality that, when compared with the unadventurousness of similar attempts to form small groups, amounted almost to audacity.

Weakness in new works

Now seen in London the company did not make quite the same favourable impression they made in Edinburgh. The reasons for this are partly to be found in the changes in the group's personnel (only four of the original dancers remain), partly in the fact that the two new ballets presented (Wendy Hilton's *A Short Story* and Iain Montague's *Arcadian Suite*) are weaker than the original repertory and so lower the general standard, and furthermore the revised ballet, Elizabeth West's *Black Eyed Susan*, has not been improved in the revision. Also, the larger theatre did not suit the group as well as the tiny stage on which they gave their Edinburgh performances.

The West Country Ballet's aims remain admirable, but they seem rather further from fulfilment than they did last summer. The need for a stronger company and, even more, an experienced choreographer is quite obvious if the company is to succeed in its intentions. To a lesser extent the company requires imaginative designing and better lighting.

They are still a better bet than most of the modest companies that have previously

BALLET HIGHLIGHTS: Nadia Nerina and Alexis Rassine, of the Sadler's Wells Ballet, will tour the English provinces during July, giving concert performances under the title of Ballet Highlights. *The* Aurora pas de deux, *in which they are seen here, is one of the many classical excerpts they are to give.*

Previously they have made two highly successful tours of their native South Africa.

Photo: Houston Rogers

traipsed across the English landscape. Indeed it is more their serious intentions than present shortcomings that invite somewhat harsher criticism than would normally be voiced against a small-scale venture.

Of the present repertory *Herne the Hunter* by Michael Holmes and *The Selchie* by Wendy Hilton, remain the most considerable contributions. The first seemed longer and a little less effective on a second seeing, yet the idea is a good one and the performances of Peter Darrell (now only appearing in this work as a guest artist) as Henry VIII and Ronnie Curran as Herne are noteworthy.

The earlier criticism of *The Selchie*, that its division between ballet and folk-dance is too arbitrary, still stands, but some of the earlier choreography and all Michael Hobson's score are worthwhile. The choreographer, Wendy Hilton, gave a good performance as the Seal who is transformed into a woman and fascinates an earthly lover, and Ronnie Curran (easily the best dancer in the company) was excellent in a Scottish sword dance.

Clive Barnes

ANGNA ENTERS

A LIST of the props used by Miss Enters at the Arts Theatre would run into some pages. She positively seems to crave the help of an assistant on stage, and by this I do not mean that her talents are so large that she makes one see the whole character of the imaginary persons she is playing opposite. She seems incapable of holding the attention of the audience for a whole evening and the more she resorts to the use of props the more obvious are her limitations. Ribbons appear in three items and she has a passion for hats.

Her music, background or inspiration, is selected from the works of Debussy, Honegger, Poulenc, Strauss and even ragtime. It was well played by Martin Goldstein at the piano. I must also add that she is quite unnaturally keen on strutting to tangos. There is no doubt that Angna Enters has a most enjoyable time when she is performing. Unfortunately, most of her material is trivial and every item in her repertoire seems to be burlesqued. The results of the comedy touches in such items as *Ikon-Byzantine* and *Boy Cardinal* (with castanets to the tango) are indeed extraordinary.

Infectious boredom

Of all her impressions, the only one I cared for was the *Aphrodisiac*—the street-walker on the café terrace with an aperitif spying potential buyers in her handbag mirror. There was an effective touch in her *Figures in Moonlight*. Wearing a Pierrot costume, she stabbed through the heart a dressmaker's model which was clad in a tutu, producing a long thread of red ribbon with which she strangled herself.

The programme note for this number is flexible enough to be misinterpreted. "The face of a woman is like a poisoned dart which wounds and festers the soul. He who desires to avoid these wounds must avoid going to public spectacles for it is wiser to remain at home than fall into the hands of the enemy . . ." For "enemy" I read Angna Enters.

The main ingredient of some of the items is lassitude and listlessness. Boredom on stage is dangerously infectious and here it comes close to overcoming the audience. Her facial expressions seem to lack variety. At least, those she uses are used so often that they cease to have any effect. On the other hand, her costumes have been most carefully chosen. But then she is also a painter, and many of her tableaux have the scenic composition of paintings, particularly the attractive impressionist character of *Pique-Nique*.

Judging by the response of the audience, she has something of a following who apparently regard her as an artist of rare sublety. Of course, it is most amusing to watch Angna Enters paint watercolours to Strauss music, but then that is not mime.

E. C. Mason

DANCE LECTURE

MARGARET MORRIS ON DANCE NOTATION

Presented by the British Dance Notation on May 13.

MARGARET MORRIS started work on her system of notation in 1910, which means that she was working simultaneously with Laban. But after developing it for some years she decided to terminate her work. The main reason for this was that she could find no one to take it seriously and nobody who would continue studying it. Dancers only wanted to dance.

Now she has resumed work on it and has made some very recent alterations. She feels strongly that there is an urgent practical need for a universally accepted method of notation. A most remarkable feature of her lecture, which was illustrated by charts and diagrams but without a demonstration, was her generous attitude. If her system is tested and found to be unsatisfactory, she is quite prepared to be "big-hearted" and give it up to devote her time to studying and teaching a superior method. She is also prepared to surrender any part which could be valuably incorporated in a better system.

In that she uses a horizontal stave of four lines, her method is similar to the Benesh system. However, she leaves a central space for the metrical time of the dance where the middle line of the Benesh stave would be.

Her signs have been selected so that they will not only be quick to write, but also to guard against inaccurate writing. Of course, the simplest signs chosen are those that will be used most often.

She is interested in painting and from this she has derived an idea that the symbol should show some feeling for the movement it represents. She has used this approach in evolving an ingenious sign for turns. I am inclined to agree with Ann Hutchinson who pointed out that she did not think the signs would be as easy to read as those of Laban, which use shading and bold outlines.

In the main her approach is anatomical because it is partly based on the limitations of body movement—the limitations of the angles of movement of the arm from the shoulder to the elbow or the leg from the thigh to the knee. It is therefore adjustable to the person reading the notation, which means that one person may be able to go further than that which is the limit for someone else.

Her movements are written from what would be the dancer's point of view and, as in other systems, her expression is based on musical terminology. She believes that her system can provide for the smallest detail, though in practical work it may not be always necessary to write every movement.

I hear from Ann Hutchinson that she has been in Sweden where Massine has been discussing the Stepanov method with her, and in Paris where Conté has been demonstrating his system to her. In American magazines, Eugene Loring is now advertising his system, and for its next lecture the Society hopes to present a lecture on the Nijinsky system, pending permission from America.

With all the bewildering developments in the field of notation I think it worth stressing the point Margaret Morris made. Bearing in mind the fundamental differences between the Benesh and Laban methods, will it be possible to amalgamate the better ideas of any particular methods to form an even better and more useful single system?

The new society has everything to gain from making a detailed comparative study of the different systems but, so far, it has only a group studying the Laban method.

E. C. Mason

SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE BALLET

Triumphant London return

DESPITE a not particularly well-balanced programme, the Theatre Ballet made what was in the main a triumphant return to Sadler's Wells on May 29, the first night of their three-weeks season at their former permanent home. The many changes in personnel and the fatigue of constant touring have had surprisingly little effect on the company—there is still the same youthful eagerness and team spirit that previously gave the group its character. If there has been any deterioration of standards, it is more noticeable in the raw-toned orchestral response to John Lanchbery's spirited direction.

The programme opened, rather unsuitably I thought, with Rodrigues' passion-soaked dramatic ballet *Blood Wedding*. This powerful work calls for actor-dancers of temperament to put across its unbridled ecstasies of love, jealousy and revenge. It was grippingly performed by a strong cast with all the necessary qualities, headed by David Shields as a vehemently intense and darkly handsome Leonardo, Sara Neil as the guilty Bride, Margaret Hill as the Mother, and Walter Trevor as an appropriately ingenuous Bridegroom.

It is a measure of the conviction carried by Neil's and Hill's performances and of Rodrigues' success in translating the relationships of Lorca's play into ballet terms, that in the final moments when the Mother, transfigured by grief and loathing, attempts to revenge her son's death, we wish that she should plunge the knife into the stooping figure of his faithless Bride.

The "peasant" pas de deux from *Giselle*, although danced well enough individually by Patricia Cox and Michael Boulton, seemed under-rehearsed, particularly in the matter of supported turns. The programme wrongly gives the name of the composer of this excerpt as Adolphe Adam: it is by Burgmüller.

Next came the first public performance of Macmillan's *Sonnambulism*, to be reviewed in full next month, followed by an effervescent performance of *Pineapple Poll*. Looking considerably younger than her 19 years, Patricia Cox won all hearts as Poll. If she can manage to grow an inch or two she will have the makings of a ballerina; her technique is already prodigious. Donald Britton's swagger as Captain Belaye has something of a spiv quality, but he dances his Hornpipe with tremendous ebullience.

Exhilarating Coppelia

PRESENTING Dame Ninette de Valois' new production of *Coppelia* at their home theatre for the first time on June 1, the whole company danced with a verve and precision that made this one of the most exhilarating performances of the ballet I can remember seeing.

The choreography of *Coppelia*, as it has come down to us, is very much a hodge-podge of styles, while some of the dances, particularly in the divertissement act, are downright insipid. But somehow Dame Ninette's intelligent production emphasises all the more captivating elements so that, with the company performing the work as if it were created only yesterday and specially for them, in the first two acts at least there is now never a dull moment.

The principal roles were taken at the first performance by Anne Heaton (Swanilda), Donald Britton (Frantz) and Miro Zolan (Dr. Coppelius). Unlike some poker-faced Swanildas we have seen who confusedly dance the entire ballet as if it were about a doll masquerading as a human being, Heaton brings a wide range of lively expression to her interpretation and strikes exactly the right balance between ballerina assurance and pert *gaminerie*. For all her exuberance, her every movement is beautifully finished and phrased with eloquence and musicality. Britton partnered his ballerina gallantly and, like her, communicated to the audience the joy that it is to dance. He now has absolute control over a strong, effortless technique and his performance of the last-act variation was remarkable for a wonderfully resilient *ballon* and for flashing *doubles tours en l'air* cleanly finished in a tight fifth and a generous *demi-plié*.

Miro Zolan is completely convincing as a Dr. Coppelius whose attempted dabblings in the occult are more hilarious than sinister. Apart from his excellence as a classical dancer, the mastery of mime Zolan brings to this role would make him an asset to any company.

The infectious brio with which the company gives the ballet goes a long way to distract attention from the distressing decor and costumes. But perhaps it would be fair to remind ourselves that the production was probably planned to appeal primarily to the tastes of audiences in the provinces, where the company now spends most of its time. If this was the case, then one can only admire the great care and thought that has gone into the blending of these morbidly fascinating colours. **David Hunt**

PERIOD DANCES

Historic dances given at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama on May 1.

HAVING heard Joan Wildeblood lecture on this subject I was especially keen to attend this recital of dances from the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries, reconstructed from original sources and arranged by her. It was Noverre who wrote that the public always takes a delight in deluding itself that the taste and talents of its time are far superior to those of the past. Is it fanciful to believe that we may recapture the graceful charm of those simple steps and patterns, and that dances now all but forgotten will be in vogue again one day? Already they are being taught at the School of Russian Ballet in Chelsea.

One of the most interesting was a Torch Dance of the Fifteenth Century, in which a person standing out who is handed the torch must join in the dance. Also given were the *Basse* Dance of the same period, some Italian dances of the Elizabethan age, three *Branles* (mainly circle dances) and a *Country Dance* from Playford's *Dancing Master* of the Restoration era. It was this book that Mr. Pepys bought in 1662 and he and his wife were so fascinated by it that they sat up reading it until midnight; a late hour for the Clerk of the Royal Navy who usually rose at dawn. But in spite of Playford's claim to simplicity, the fact that Pepys felt then the need of an instructor, gives some idea of the magnitude of the task Joan Wildeblood has set herself —reproducing dances which have not been performed for some centuries.

Eighteenth-century dances concluded the programme; a *minuet* for four ladies and a couple, and a spirited *Allemande*. By our standards, this was the only dance which could be called intricate, and it was well performed by Dennis Dewitt and Penelope Coffin.

The costumes selected traversed the appropriate centuries, and not the least of the pleasures was a commentary on manners and deportment taken from contemporary sources and interspersing the dances.

The programme was most rewarding and amusingly varied, and it is a tribute to Joan Wildeblood that she can get such results from untrained dancers. **E. C. Mason.**

WELLS SILVER JUBILEE

by Clive Barnes

(*continued from Page 21*)

enced by the Danish version which had been seen in London the previous year, but she retained the light touch demanded by the music, and the result, with its bright decor and costumes by Lancaster, was a satisfying compromise.

Most of the interest of the season was provided by the dancing, which was altogether of a high standard. Nerina, Beriosova, Navarre, Lindsay, and Dale all appeared as Swanilda, other debuts included Clayden and Heaton as Giselle and Beriosova as Aurora.

In the summer the company paid a visit, not with outstanding success, to the Holland Festival. The programmes appear to have been badly planned, and the company did not give quite of their best, but Ashton had a personal success as a choreographer.

The year marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the death of Diaghilev and the company commemorated the event by engaging Grigoriev and Tchernicheva to mount Fokine's *The Firebird*. The production was first given at the Edinburgh Festival.

In the autumn the Wells made an exchange visit with the ballet company of the Paris Opéra. Both companies raised luke-warm fanaticism in the other's capital, and the Wells continued from Paris to a tour of Italy where they met their more customary acclamation.

Revivals: *Coppelia* (Ivanov and Cecchetti, rev. Sergueeff and de Valois-Delibes-Lancaster) with Nerina, Blair, Ashton, Anya Linden and Farron); *The Firebird* (Fokine, rev. Grigoriev and Tchernicheva-Stravinsky-Gontcharova) with Fonteyn, Somes, Beriosova and Ashton.

1955—The new year opened with the return of Beryl Grey in *Swan Lake*. A few days later Ashton presented two new ballets on the same night, *Rinaldo and Armida* and *Variations on a Theme of Purcell*.

Elaine Fifield, who had joined the company the previous year had one of the leading roles in *Variations on a Theme of Purcell*, but her main chance came with the creation of the leading role in Ashton's third new ballet of the season, *Madame Chrysanthème*. The list of creations is completed by a new version of *The Lady and the Fool*, a ballet first produced by Cranko for the Theatre Ballet.

Among the new assumptions were Beriosova as Odette-Odile, and Heaton and Anya Linden as Swanilda, the latter making her ballerina debut.

In the autumn the company made its fourth trip to America, where they had their by now customary triumph. Elaine Fifield was prevented from going by illness, but the company was joined by a number of recruits from the Theatre Ballet, including Maryon Lane, Annette Page and Pirmin Trecu.

One of the events of the year was the publication of Mary Clarke's book, *The Sadler's Wells Ballet*. This well-documented, and concise history provided both a record and a tribute to the company on the eve of its Silver Jubilee.

Creations: *Rinaldo and Armida* (Ashton-Arnold-Peter Rice) with Beriosova, Somes, Farron and Hynd; *Variations on a Theme of Purcell* (Ashton-Britten-Peter Snow) with Grant, Fifield, Nerina and Jackson; *Madame Chrysanthème* (Ashton-Alan Rawsthorne-I. Lambert) with Fifield, Grant, Doyle, Heaton, Clayden and Powell; *The Lady and the Fool* (Cranko-Verdi/Mackerras-Richard Beer) with Grey, Chatfield, Powell, Blair, Field, Doyle, Larson and Clayden.

For many facts and details in this survey I am indebted to Mary Clarke's book, The Sadler's Wells Ballet—A History and An Appreciation (*A. & C. Black*).

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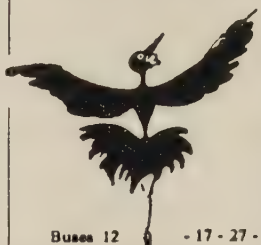

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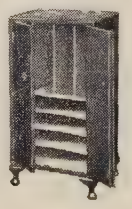

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FRANCE

SUITE ESPAGNOLE

TOGETHER with Flora Albaicin, who used to dance with Antonio, Roberto Iglesias, the former partner of Rosario, presented an original programme that owed nothing to their illustrious colleagues at the Théâtre de l'Etoile on May 3. Confirming their early promise, these two dancers seem, indeed, to have developed warm and attractive pensonalities, and although its composition is still a little uneven, this *Suite Espagnole* reveals a sincere attempt at creating something new, from the standpoint both of choreography and of presentation.

For instead of the usual succession of dances in Andalusian, Catalan, Basque and other styles, there are here several short ballets which follow one another in rapid succession. Also, while we have for long been accustomed to seeing classical dancers, from Elssler to Toumanova, adopt an Iberian *port de bras*, a *zapateado* and castanets in order to perform some pseudo-Spanish number, here we see a Spanish dancer resorting to classical technique.

The few elements Inglesias has preserved, whether steps or movements of choreography, are judiciously inserted into the whole, and this restrained experiment deserves to be praised for the developments it promises.

Each ballet or solo variation is presented in a different décor and with new costumes. The bright, fresh colours have been skilfully matched in the general effect of the spectacle, while the lines and shapes owe much to contemporary painting. While the singers and guitarists have the maturity and assurance which the years bring, the very young *corps de ballet* still appears a little inexperienced, but this only shows off the more the brilliance of the soloists.

Thus there follow in happy succession, *Romeria Canaria*, showing a festival in the Canary Isles, with typical *Isa* sung by the warm voice of Maria Merida, a *Por Alegrias* from Cadiz and an Andalusian *Taranto*, a shortened version of *The Three-Cornered Hat*, in which Maruja Blanco gives proof of a restrained authority, *Estampe Catalane*, a very interesting *Zapateado* by Roberto Iglesias, *Dolor de un Traje de luces*, short and delightfully simple, *Soledad Montoya*, inspired by Federico Garcia Lorca, and finally the ritual *Soleares y Cane*.

Roberto Iglesias has succeeded in developing his very real talents. shining just as much in the strict *Zapateado* as in a freer dramatic medium. His very virile style has an infectious warmth, a real simplicity, and a pleasing, unaffected modesty of manner. Flora Albaicin has learnt by his example to avoid the unattractive grimaces that formerly marred her work, and she now dances with a more thrilling sharpness of attack. This young company deserves the greatest success.

FRENCH FESTIVALS

FROM July 28 to August 5, in the course of its Third International Dance Festival, Aix-les-Bains will present Mariemma and her Spanish Ballet, and Keita Fodeba and his African Ballet. Jean Babilée will also appear there at the head of his own company and will give four new ballets, two of which will have choreography by him—*Cameleopart* (music by Sauguet) and *Sables* (music by Le Roux)—while the other two, *Ballade* (music by Debussy) and *Marathon* (music by Heuzé) will possibly be choreographed by Jerome Robbins.

London's Festival Ballet have already danced at Bordeaux, on May 11, 12 and 15. The Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas will give performances at Vichy on June 30 and July 1.

On June 16 the Paris Opéra Ballet will dance at the Ducal Palace at Dijon in honour of the *Nuits de Bourgogne*. On July 29 the company will give *Istar*, *Suite de danses*, *Variations* and *Divertissement* at the Théâtre Antique, Orange, and on July 31 and August 14 they will present two gala performances at Evian including *Soir de Fête*, *Suite en Blanc*, *L'après-midi d'un Faune*, *Variations*, and extracts from *Le Lac des Cygnes*, *Roméo et Juliette* (Prokofiev), *Le Chevalier et la Damoiselle* and *L'Oiseau de Feu*.

On September 8 and 9, at the Besançon Festival, Antonio will give two Spanish dance galas.

BULLFIGHT: Roberto Inglesias killing the bull in his effective Dolor de un Traje de luces. *This was one of best of his many ballets given during a recent season at the Théâtre de L'Etoile in Paris. Photo: Lido*

NEWS IN BRIEF

AT the Opéra rehearsals are continuing of Harold Lander's *Concerto*, with music by Béla Bartók, which is due to be created during the forthcoming ballet season, with Yvette Chauviré and Peter Van Dijk. A revival of *Le Chevalier et la Damoiselle* has also been announced.

IN the middle of June an exhibition dedicated to the great Spanish dancer Argentina will be shown at the ballet section of the Paris Opéra Library.

BEGINNING May 15 Françoise and Dominique and their *Ballets Modernes de Paris* are giving a series of 30 performances of a show called *Parades*, *Complaintes et Farandoles*.

A BALLET gala at the Salle Pleyel on April 19 featured Lycette Darsonval and Youly Algaroff in extracts from *The Sleeping Beauty*, Claude Bessy and Max Bozzoni in Lifar's *Pas et Lignes* (music: Debussy), Solange Schwarz in the *Blue Bird* variation and an amusing *Cake-Walk*.

FOUNDER of the Ballets Ho, the dancer Georges Reich is to make his first appearance on the screen in Robert Vernay's film *Lumière du Soir*.

Marie-Françoise Christout

AMERICA

AMERICAN DANCE FESTIVAL

Two more new works given during the American Dance Festival. The other creations are reviewed on page eleven.

SYMPHONY FOR STRINGS

First New York performance given at the Juilliard School of Music and Dance on April 20, 1956. Choreography by José Limón. Costumes by Pauline Lawrence. Music by William Schuman.

Cast

JOSE LIMON, PAULINE KONER, LUCAS HOVING, RUTH CURRIER, BETTY JONES, LAVINIA NIELSEN

THIS work, premiered last summer during the American Dance Festival at New London, and reported last autumn, has a score by Juilliard's William Schuman that provides an ideal basis for an abstract dance work, which this is. As in all of José Limón's works, there is a sound choreographic base, movement invention and excellent dancing from all six members of the cast. Like abstract works in all fields of dance, and there is a place for them, this is pleasing to watch but not expecially moving. In this instance, it made an excellent opening dance and it is a welcome addition to José Limón's already very distinguished repertoire.

DAWN IN NEW YORK

First given at the Juilliard School of Music and Dance, New York, on April 27, 1956. Choreography by Doris Humphrey. Set and

Costumes by William Sherman. Music by Hunter Johnson. Solo pianist, Joseph Bloch.

Cast

Young Man .. .. JOHN BARKER
Sign of Spring .. JOYCE TRISTER
Black Doves DIANE ADLER, JANET BYER, PATRICIA CHRISTOPHER, ANNA FRIEDLAND, MAUREEN GILLICK, MARGOT HOLDSTEIN, MELISA NICOLAIDES, FLORENCE PETERS, POLIGENA ROGERS
Workers KEVIN CARLISLE, HARLAN McCALLUM, DAVID WYNNE, DUREVOL QUITZOW, CHESTER WOLENSKI

Based on a theme taken from two poems of Federico Garcia Lorca.

"*The New York dawn has*
four columns of mud
and a hurricane of black doves . . .
"*The dawn comes and no one receives it in his mouth, . . .*
"*they know they are going to the mud of figures and laws,*
"*to artless games, to fruitless sweat.*"

From *The Dawn*

"*What sings of Spring*
do you hold in your hand?
A rose of blood
and a white lily."

From *Ballad of the Little Square*

CHOREOGRAPHED by Doris Humphrey for the student-members of the Juilliard School of Dance, this new work was set to Hunter Johnson's Concerto for Piano and Chamber Orchestra and for its dramatic base used the themes from two poems by Lorca. Obviously New York was not one of Lorca's favourite cities and his bitter theme of the struggle for existence in a metropolis sets a young man and girl as his protagonists in a frenzied, slave-driven world where "the New York dawn has four columns of black mud and a hurricane of black doves," and where workers are little more than robots.

This is an old theme, though a valid one, and again Doris Humphrey was hailed by the New York press for her dance-translation of this theme. Perhaps because this view of city existence is dated as far as I am concerned, this work did not have the profundity that it seemed to have for the cheering audience. I must add, however, that it was danced extremely well although the costumes by William Sherman were, in the main, quite unattractive and unsuitable as far as movement was concerned. **Arthur Todd**

TWO IN QUARTET: *Shirley Broughton and Maggie Neuman in Broughton's ballet*–Quartet
Photo: Maria Aguilera

More Modern Dancers
by DAVID VAUGHAN

(*continued from page twenty-three*)

of outline. Her dances are direct, exhilarating, humane yet unneurotic; what matters is what you see, not what it is supposed to mean.

Although Broughton is violently opposed to the use of dance for the transmission of literary or psychological themes, it would be as inaccurate to call her dances abstract as it is to apply this term (in a derogatory sense) to Balanchine's ballets. Nor are they merely callisthenic. Like Balanchine, Broughton constructs her dances according to the laws of musical form—such as *Canzone*, which is in form a double concerto, with a male and a female soloist, and a group that serves as an orchestral accompaniment.

However, the element in her choreography that most gives it a special flavour is that Broughton, uniquely among modern dancers, usually draws her inspiration from an observation of nature. This element first made itself felt in her beautiful group dance, *Praises for Hummingbirds and Hawks*, to a limpid score by Lou Harrison. The whole dance is a kind of descriptive poem. It is interesting, in this connection, to note that various sections of *Canzone* had evocative working titles such as *Waving Wheat* and *Ebbing Tide*.

Her new solo, *Timbres*, a revision of an earlier group piece, while it is formally speaking a series of studies, each of which explores a different dynamic quality (as *Bounce*, *Stillness*, and so on), also evokes images from nature, some of them actually suggested by the titles of the studies (*Waterfall*, *Gust*, *Whirlwind* etcetera). This almost Wordsworthian feeling for nature is, I think, an important positive contribution to the development of a new trend in modern dancing, since it suggests a possible alternative to an ingrown, neurotic form of expression.

I am not the first to suggest that a work by Broughton would be a valuable addition to a ballet repertoire. Her style is perhaps easier for ballet-trained dancers to assimilate, since there is a kind of long-limbed looseness about it, allied to a tremendous strength in the lower back. Certainly a well-trained company like the New York City Ballet would look good in a Broughton dance.

Other personalities of the Modern Dance will be included in David Vaughan's article next month

Ballet Dates

SADLER'S WELLS BALLET
at the Edinburgh Festival, the Empire Theatre

Aug.
20 *Noctambules, Birthday Offering, The Lady and the Fool*
21 *Noctambules, Birthday Offering, The Lady and the Fool*
22 (M & E) *Noctambules, Birthday Offering, The Lady and the Fool*
23, 24, 25 (M & E) *Coppelia*
27 *Les Sylphides, The Miraculous Mandarin* (première), *Homage to the Queen*
28 *Les Sylphides, The Miraculous Mandarin, Homage to the Queen*
29 (M) *Les Sylphides, Coppelia* Act 3, *Homage to the Queen*
29 (E) *Les Sylphides, The Miraculous Mandarin, Homage to the Queen*
30, 31, Sept. 1 (M & E) *Le Lac des Cygnes*
Sept.
4-29 The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden (the season will include the London première of Rodrigues' *The Miraculous Mandarin* and the world première of Cranko's *The Prince of the Pagodas*)

AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE
at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden
From August 20 to September 1

Programme to be announced.

FESTIVAL BALLET

June 29-July 5 Holland Festival (Amsterdam, The Hague)
at the Royal Festival Hall, London
July
11-16 *Les Sylphides, Homage to a Princess* (London première), *Etudes*
17-21 *Scheherazade, Homage to a Princess, Napoli*
23-25 *Swan Lake* (Act 2), *The Nutcracker*
26-28 *Scheherazade, Homage to a Princess, Etudes*
July 30-Aug. 1 *Grand Divertissement* (*La Esmeralda*), *Les Deux Errants* (London première), *Le Spectre de la Rose, Prince Igor*
2-4 *Swan Lake* (Act 2), *Les Deux Errants, Le Spectre de la Rose, Prince Igor*
6-8 *Swan Lake* (Act 2), *The Nutcracker*
9-11 *Les Sylphides, Etudes, Petrouchka*
Programmes until Sept. 8 to be announced
Evenings 8 p.m.; Wed., Sat. matinees 2.30 p.m.

SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE BALLET

June
18 The Hippodrome, Brighton
26 Granada Festival, Spain
Aug.
20 Santander Festival, Spain

BALLET RAMBERT

June
18 The Playhouse, Oxford
July
2 Theatre Royal, Windsor
10 Llangollen Eisteddfod (*Giselle* with Alicia Markova)
Spanish Tour
24 Valencia
31 Vigo
Aug.
4 Gijon
9 Cadiz
14 Huelva
17 Jaen

RAM GOPAL INDIAN BALLET
at the Edinburgh Festival, the Empire Theatre

Aug.
3, 4, 5 (M & E) Programme of Indian dances
6, 7, 8 (M & E) *The Legend of the Taj Mahal* (European première of full-length work)

THE BOLSHOI BALLET
at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden

Oct. 3-27 Ulanova and full company from the Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow, in *Le Lac des Cygnes*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Giselle* and *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*.

BALLET HIGHLIGHTS
Nadia Nerina and Alexis Rassine in Concert Performances

July
2 New Theatre, Oxford
9 Royal Court, Liverpool
16 Grand Theatre, Leeds
23 Opera House, Manchester

Ballet Correspondents

(*Abbreviations: b.c.—ballet correspondence; m.—male; f.—female; m.a.—my age; o.i.—other interests; l.s.—languages; p.r.—photograph requested*).

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